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INVESTIGATOR

AND

EXPOSITOR

OF

PROPHECY.



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THE
INVESTIGATOR & EXPOSITOR
OF
PROPHECY.

Introductory Observations.

THE commencement of a *New Series* of the INVESTIGATOR OF PROPHECY, and the commencement of a *New Year* of existence, both invite us to make a few introductory observations.

I. To the Reader who only enters on the perusal of our Work with the present Number, and who is consequently unacquainted with what was written by us in the Postscript of the last Number, we would take the opportunity of stating, what is the difference proposed by us in the Volume now commenced, which gives occasion to our calling it a *New Series*.

The former numbers of the Investigator, amounting now to four volumes, were conducted on the principle of *free discussion*; so that whatsoever views were entertained by serious Christians on the subject of prophecy, we considered ourselves pledged to give them insertion, provided they were advanced with tolerable ability and with gravity. This has produced a mass of communications, containing articles greatly at variance with each other, as regards the prophetic views advocated by their respective authors,

and provoking on some points considerable controversy. The result has been, that though much learned and interesting matter has been brought before the public, the student of prophecy, who was only entering on the investigation thereof, found himself embarrassed in the outset by contradictory interpretations and conflicting views. Besides which, the matter which we had ourselves previously designed to bring forward, and which we sometimes considered important in the way of information, was continually postponed, from the necessity of giving immediate insertion to the papers of Correspondents, who were committed in discussion: and thus the Work was, in another important point of view, rendered less useful to the inquirer.

Without therefore stating other considerations, which have *personally* weighed with us, it is sufficient to observe, that we hope in the present series to remedy these two principal defects; and by the exclusion of articles, the insertion of which we should deem unprofitable, and by appending notes to those we do insert, whenever we consider the sub-

ject calls for it, to afford the reader a means of investigating Prophecy without that perplexity which was previously complained of.

We hope likewise to make the Investigator and Expositor more of a repertory of information, by giving—

1st. Expositions of various Scriptures, bearing on the subject of Prophecy ;—

2ndly. The views of approved Interpreters of former times ; including Translations of portions of the earlier Fathers ; and Extracts from more recent interpreters, or the substance of their works condensed ;—

3rdly. Reviews of the Works of modern Writers ; so that the Reader may be apprised of their contents and character ;—

4thly. Information of every description, (critical, documentary, political or otherwise,) which we may deem calculated to aid or interest the Reader.

And more especially do we hope and pray, that the Work may be made instrumental, in a ten-fold degree, in arousing the attention of Christians to take heed to the light of prophecy ; to consider the signs of the times in which we live ; to make practical application of the Word of God to the important events which are so rapidly passing around us ; and to stir up the ministers of the Gospel to put their people in remembrance of the things spoken before by the prophets of the Lord ; lest haply the day of the Lord do after all overtake themselves and their people as a thief in the night, (contrary to the assurance given to those who are *instructed* in the times and seasons, 1 Thess. v. 1—4,) and find them asleep, or off their watch, when they ought to be “ looking for him and loving his appearing.”

At the same time however that we wish to divest our publication of

its controversial character, it must not be inferred that we purpose to exclude all that militates against our own opinions ; or to prevent reply when sentiments appear countenanced by ourselves, which our readers may be enabled to disprove. Our great aim and object is to elicit TRUTH, and to search and inquire what is really the mind of the Spirit revealed in the word of Prophecy. We are sensible that this is not to be attained unto, in such a manner as to afford confidence and satisfaction, without considering well what can reasonably be advanced on both sides of every disputed point. Were we left, indeed, merely to follow our own taste, we should, for ourselves, prefer the Investigator in its previous controversial form, and conducted on its former principle. For besides the numerous and able articles it contains on general prophetic topics, our attention has been drawn, by the discussion to which it has given rise, to various important subjects and considerations, which we think would probably not have been weighed by us. Besides which, the ground of many opinions and interpretations has been thoroughly discussed and sifted ; and while we are thereby enabled to regard some points as more decidedly confirmed, and not to be successfully disputed against by the wit and ingenuity of men ; there are others, which we used to take for granted, that we have now been led to conclude cannot so well stand before a well directed and searching criticism.

We shall therefore consider it our duty to bring from time to time before the Reader those opinions which have been, in various ages and in different sections of the Church of Christ, seriously entertained ; and though these opinions will necessarily be in numerous respects at variance, we think that the becom-

ing gradually acquainted with them will in several respects be useful, and tend to promote a more complete understanding of the subject. And though we conceive that the Holy Spirit can at any time "shew us things to come," and may vouchsafe to unlearned individuals the right and true apprehension of a prophecy, which may have been hidden from ages and from generations, and from the wise and prudent in our own age; yet the ordinary mode, by which the Spirit teaches, is through the aid of those helps and means which that same Spirit has himself divided to men in the first instance, for the use of the Church and for the perfecting of the saints. We would therefore neither despise, nor reject without inquiry, the wisdom of former interpreters; nor would we turn a deaf ear to the objections made to many of their statements by modern interpreters: both sides deserve attention; and to become acquainted with them will frequently prevent us from the dogmatical conceit that we are advancing something original ourselves; and will teach us likewise from what source many plausible modern theories, and objections to theories, have at different times arisen.

II. As regards the *Year* on which we are now entering, we are naturally led to consider, whether the necessity, importance and interest of the Work in which we are engaged may be said to have diminished; and whether the signs of the times are such, as to form any considerable argument for its continuance.

The state of political parties, and the warfare of principles, have long been such, as to form an unprecedented era in the history of Europe, and even of the world. We have been permitted to conclude another

year of strife and excitement; but such is nevertheless the prospect before us, that men of all parties and of all opinions, religious and political, appear to concur in the conviction, that human affairs are still rapidly hastening forward toward some important crisis. As regards indeed the *nature* of that crisis, great diversity of sentiment exists. Some view it as a general break up of the *social* system, introductory to that great tribulation which is to usher in the coming of the Lord. Others regard it as the break up of worn out *political* systems, which is to terminate in halcyon days, in which the happiness of mankind is to be wonderfully perfected by the general influence of democratic principles, and the partial banishment of religion; who, though she may be tolerated in the closet, or at the family hearth, is no longer to be in any way allowed to utter her voice abroad, or in connexion with the affairs of the state. A third party, viewing only the *missionary* efforts which are simultaneously going forward, consider that we are gradually but rapidly gliding by their means into a millennium of piety and universal holiness to the Lord. Now the *BIBLE* is the only source from which we can form any thing approaching to an accurate judgement of the real character and tendency of the events that are passing around us. The word of Prophecy is specially a light for dark and troublous times:^a and it is by its rays alone that the believer can derive solid comfort, and understand the peculiar duties which devolve upon him, and the peculiar dangers which he has to guard against: and more especially it behoves the priests, the ministers of the altar, to remember that they are placed as watchmen in Israel;—that

it is their appointed office to tell their people "what of the night;"—"what they see coming;"—whether it be "a sword" or "peace." (Ezek. xxxiii.)

Such is the duty of the ministers of religion: would that we could say that it were so generally acted upon, even by the devout portion of them, as to render useless the continuance of such an incentive to the study of prophecy, or of such a help to it, as we trust "*The Investigator and Expositor*" will approve itself. Many, we rejoice to say, have indeed had their attention earnestly drawn to the subject since our work commenced; and the increase of sober conviction on this head is cheering: but there are still many who are grievously neglectful. When members of their flock would seek knowledge at their lips, and have inquired concerning prophecy, saying, "Read this I pray thee," the answer has been like those of old: "I cannot for it is sealed;" or "I am not learned:"^b whilst some, instead of candidly acknowledging their inability, have systematically discouraged the study of prophecy, or have treated it as a portion of the word of God not worthy of being ranked among the "*all Scripture*" that is "*profitable*."

It is indeed to be regretted, that some, who have evidently taken up the subject of prophecy, have indulged a dogmatical spirit which has disgusted, whilst others have fallen into insobriety that has alarmed; but these things are nothing more than what generally accompany the revival and earnest preaching of all doctrine. It is the constant proneness of erring human nature to run into extremes or extravagancies; and there is no subject whatsoever, which Satan has not endeavoured to disparage

by similar means. In the mean while however, the duty and responsibility of Christians remain the same, and God's Word remains the same: it plainly shows that we are liable, on the one hand, to be rebuked as hypocrites, if we are unable to discern the signs of the times;^c it declares, on the other hand, the blessedness of *him* that readeth (viz. the minister) and of *them* that hear (viz. the people) the words of that prophecy given in the Apocalypse.^d

We may truly say then, in regard to our Work, "*Is there not a cause?*" We cannot be wrong in endeavouring to incite our brethren to so much attention to the word of God, as will render them more watchful, and stir up the hope that is in them. This consideration is doubly cogent when it is remembered, that *hope* has exclusively a reference to things to come: "for we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"^e To take away therefore that portion of *God's* word which relates to things to come, is to remove the very food of hope, and to quench one of those three cardinal graces which were to abide in the Church throughout its period of trial.

Moreover, whatever may have been the disappointments of the Church, through false alarms having been raised at times of the Lord's coming; and however frequently its hope may have been deferred, until the heart of some may have become sick;^f it is not the proper remedy for this disappointment to let the Church fall into supineness and neglect of prophecy. The argument that pious men have been *mistaken*, would hold as good the very hour previous to the actual appearing of Jesus, as is does at the present day;

^b Isa. xxix. 11. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 16.

^c Rom. viii. 24.

^d Matt. xvi. 3.

^e Rev. i. 3.

^f Prov. xiii. 12.

and were it heeded therefore, the Church must inevitably be taken by surprise. It is declared however to be the special privilege of believers, that that day shall *not* overtake them as a thief; but that they shall be aware—not of the actual “day and hour,” but of “the times and seasons.”^g And this can only be effected by turning to the prophecies, and ascertaining “what withholdeth,” and what are to be the *signs* of the times immediately to precede our Lord’s advent.

There are however circumstances which must create a considerable and *particular* interest in the minds of some, as regards the year on which we are now entering. Many have declared it to be the year in which great events shall come to pass. Bengelius, an eminent German expositor, has placed the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ in 1836.* John Wesley, in his exposition of the New Testament, brings to an end the time, times, and half a time of the Beast in 1836, and likewise the “little season” in which Satan rages with great wrath; though Wesley appears to be only a follower

of Bengelius. The Rev. W. A. Holmes, Chancellor of Cashel, terminates in 1836 five different important epochs; and proceeds on principles quite independent of Bengelius, and apparently is unconscious of the views of that writer.† Mr. Wolff likewise, the eminent Jewish Missionary, discovered a singular tradition among the Dervishes of Persia, respecting an expectation of the coming of Christ in 1836. In answer to a question put to one of this class, when he was at Meshed in 1831, the following short dialogue took place:—

J. Wolff,—Why dost thou not speak?

Dervish, After the religion of *Jesus* shall be manifested, then I shall speak.

J. W. When shall this be?

Der. After that *Jesus* shall have been upon earth as you now are.

J. W. When shall he appear?

Der. Five years hence.

J. W. What shall then happen?

Der. (*In a melodious voice*)

Thousand hearts shall then be one,
The Lamb and the Wolf shall together
lie down,
And *Jesus* shall then lay down his life.‡

* No expositor on the Continent has enjoyed more of popularity than Bengelius; arising perhaps more from the circumstance of his publishing his works in German instead of Latin—which rendered them accessible to so much larger a class of readers—than from any superior understanding of his subject. Prophecy is not now, in any shape, popular on the continent; but almost all those who *do* attend to it are followers of Bengelius. A great number of persons of this description emigrated from the kingdom of Wirtemberg in 1818, under the impression that great judgements were about to fall on Germany. They settled at Miloshna, near Ekaterinaslov, and in other places in the east of Russia. We are informed that there are several thousands now existing at this place only, who have recently been visited by a Missionary of the London Society for promoting the conversion of the Jews, and that there are seven congregations of them also in Georgia, all of which are waiting in lively expectation of the Lord’s advent in 1836.

† See a Review of Mr. Holmes’s Work—“The Time of the End”—in Vol. iv. of the Investigator, p. 109.

‡ See his Journal recently published, p. 130. This tradition as, regards Christ’s laying down his life when he shall appear, seems to rest upon some confusion of the circumstances of the first and second advents, gleaned from the Holy Scriptures. The expectation prevails extensively among Mahometans, that their great *Imam*, Mohde, shall appear again, and cause their religion to *prevail*, and that he is to be immediately *preceded* by *Jesus*. Some sects of them consider that Mahomedanism is, on the contrary, destined to *wane* before Christ at his coming, and to disappear.

g 1 Thess. iv.

We candidly confess that we ourselves place no great reliance on the computations either of Bengelius or Mr. Holmes, neither on those of the Persian dervish; and so far as the year of the Advent of our Lord is concerned, we greatly question if it will be given to any to know that before hand: though we conceive, as we have previously intimated, that a knowledge of the times and seasons, and a watchful observance of the signs of the times, will enable the Church to be fully persuaded that her redemption must be at hand.* The circumstance which serves chiefly to attach any particular interest to these opinions is, the coincidence of several apparently independent interpretations and traditions in one year; though some of these are so manifestly erroneous and extravagant, as to deprive them in our estimation of any weight. We might be induced to consider more carefully the views of Bengelius, were we not led, in our own case, to the conclusion, that certain events (e. g. the slaying of the Witnesses, Rev. xi) have not yet come to pass; which events must occupy a longer space of time than the year we are entered on can allow them. We are willing to admit, that many able interpreters and critics have concluded that the Witnesses have been already put to death, and are now

risen: and if we could but feel convinced of this, it would remove from our minds one principal ground of hesitation which we experience in regard to some other systems of interpretation, which assign dates now near at hand for the termination of various events; but which dates we cannot bring ourselves seriously to entertain, until we have first seen those events to which we have alluded come to pass, or begin to come to pass.†

There is another event apparently at hand, which we view with different feelings; viz. the conclusion of the *sixth Millennium* of the world. The expectation, indeed, that at the end of the 6000 years the Millennium should commence, is not supported by any direct testimony of Scripture with which we are acquainted; but it is so very ancient and general a tradition in the Church, —having been maintained by the Jews anterior to Christ's advent, by the Christians of the two first centuries, and by the most judicious of our Reformers,—that we cannot help regarding it ourselves with feelings of great interest. Now the Jews reckon, that they commenced the year 5996 from the Creation on the 25th of September 1835, which brings us within four years of the period named: but the correctness of their chronological computation

* Compare Matt. xxiv. 33 and 36; see also Luke xxi. 29 and 31.

† Inclining as we do to the views of Presbyter in the former series of this Work, we conceive that the "three days and a half" (Rev. xi. 9) relate to *mystical* time. If however they can be proved to be *literal* time, then we shall be compelled to admit, that the 1260 days of verse 3 is also literal: in which case, we should be obliged further to contend, that the period of prophesying in sackcloth had not yet come to pass, neither many other events, which must occupy more than a year. We believe that the beast of Rev. xi. which slays the Witnesses, is not the same as the beast of Rev. xiv: at least, that the former is exhibited under a different aspect from the latter. We must own nevertheless, that we cannot lose sight of the view taken of the Witnesses, given by E. at Vol. III. p. 185, of the Investigator. For excepting one particular, (viz. the viewing the Witnesses as continuing to prophesy in sackcloth after their resurrection,) the application of the events there brought forward to the language of the prophecy appears to us so complete, as to incline us at least to the opinion, that those events may have a *two-fold* fulfilment, the one in *mystical* time, the other in *literal* time, and by a different class of events. To this subject however we shall have an opportunity of recurring hereafter.

is disputed, and apparently with some reason : though it does not seem to be very considerably wide of the mark. For according to the computation of Mr. Clinton, in his *Fasti Hellenici* recently published, (an authority of the first respectability,) after carefully adjusting the Hebrew chronology he makes the present year (1836) to be 5974 from creation, or within 26 years of the Seventh Millennium.* But within this twenty six years, if the Millennium is at the end of them to commence, events of the most intense importance are to occur : (as the restoration of the Jews, the great crisis of tribulation, &c.) and in the opinion of some intelligent interpreters, the Son of man appears for the salvation of his saints during the transaction of those events.

It may be proper to mention here, that Mr. Cuninghame, whose opinions on the interpretation of Prophecy are entitled to the serious consideration of every student, divides the period of the seventh trumpet into seven blasts, corresponding with the seven thunders of the Apocalypse, which blasts continue each of them during a period of seven years, the whole seven blasts extending through a Jubilean period of 49 years. The seventh septenary then, corresponding with the seventh or final blast of the seventh trumpet, he considers to have commenced in 1834, and that the downfall of Babylon with violence will consequently take place in 1840, to be followed by the gathering together of the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, and the treading of the wine press of the wrath of God.† We

have in former numbers expressed our want of *conviction* in the view taken by Mr. Cuninghame of the Jubilean Chronology ; but we still advance those considerations, which cause us to hesitate, merely as preventing that conviction, and leaving room for question ; not as conclusive against his system.

Taking however the most scrupulous view of the subject, we cannot but be moved at the drawing together, to so comparatively small a focus, of the views of different writers, most of them independent of each other ;‡ together with the remarkable character of the times during the last half century, and the general expectation of some great crisis being at hand. Sure we are, taking any view of the subject, that “ now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed ; ” — convinced we are likewise, that the coming of the Lord will be *premillennial*, however writers may differ from each other respecting subordinate details ; — the current of events all loudly proclaim that he is not “ tarrying,” but rather they seem to warn us that “ a short work will the Lord make upon the earth ; ” — and whilst we look at no one particular year, we are persuaded that the true posture of the Christian Church should be that of expecting the coming of the Bridegroom in any year and every year, and to stand with the loins girt and the light burning ready to receive him. May our Lord grant, to every professor of the truth, to join with the Spirit and the Bride in saying *Come* ; — and whereas his word assures us, “ Surely I come quickly ; ” to respond to it, “ Amen, Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.”

* See an interesting notice of his Work in the Investigator, Vol. iv. page 334.

† Tract on the Jubilean Chronology, p. 21. &c.

‡ We might name other writers of eminence, as Mr. Frere, Mr. Faber, &c. who place the years 1847 and 1865 as periods previous to which some of the events alluded to are to happen.

Original Essays.

ON THE PROPHETICAL CHARACTER OF THE PSALMS.

Perhaps no portion of the Word of God has been more prized in every age of the Church than the *Book of Psalms*. The reason of this is, as I apprehend, the fact, that so many of the Psalms set forth the personal experience of the believer under various circumstances; so that every child of God is almost certain, sooner or later, to find something in that experience corresponding with his own. Thus some have only a few favourite Psalms, because their experience of the divine life is not as yet sufficiently extensive to enable them to enter into others of a similar character; whilst some are not yet brought to view any of them with particular regard, because their short acquaintance with the believer's conflict has given them scarcely any experience at all. It is after a long warfare, when the Christian has nearly fought the good fight of faith, —when he has at least run a considerable portion of his race, and is pressing forward to finish his course, —it is then that this Book becomes so much endeared to him, because his increased acquaintance with spiritual things gives him so much greater a capacity to understand and apply it.

I fear, however, that I shall provoke from some the imputation of pedantry, when I venture to assert, that there is perhaps no part of the word of God that is so frequently read, and yet so little understood! But I will put it to the conscience of the Reader himself:—are there

not some Psalms which are not delighted in, because they are either not comprehended, or presumed to relate to matters which he imagines will never have any reference to his own times or to his own immediate spiritual concerns? Are there not in other Psalms, which do approve themselves on the whole, passages, nevertheless, which are not clearly understood, and which are consequently slurred over, even though the Psalm be read and meditated on? And to this I may add, (what possibly the reader is not aware of,)—that many of those, the meaning of which is by the generality supposed to be perceived, are not really understood, as regards their principal signification; but have a forced and accommodated sense put upon them, in order to adapt them to the ordinary experience of the Church.

Under this persuasion therefore, I purpose in a series of papers, if the Lord spare and condescend to aid me, to bring before the Readers of the Investigator and Expositor a brief exposition of the Psalms; whereby I conceive, if I possess the key to their right interpretation, I shall be made instrumental in enabling many, when they read the Psalms or hear them read, to take an interest in them, and derive a measure of edification from them, which as yet they have not experienced.

But first I must request the attention of the Reader to a few principles of interpretation, which must

be kept in view in the course of our exposition, and without the recollection of which the view which will be taken hereafter of many Psalms will appear arbitrary and destitute of scriptural foundation.

1st. I view the speaker, when he opens his mouth in righteousness, to be CHRIST; but—Christ in his *head and members*, or whole body. Sometimes he speaks as the *head* only, or in his own individual character; sometimes he speaks by his Spirit in his *members*, the *Church*; and sometimes it is as head and members together.^a This is a long recognised principle as regards Christ himself; it being obvious from our Saviour's own words, that many things were written in the Psalms concerning him;^b and likewise from the fact, that what appears to be spoken in some places by David concerning himself, the Apostle insists must in its principal application be referred to Jesus.^c

It is overlooked, however, that the Spirit of Christ sometimes speaks in the character of the *members* of the body, and not so immediately as the *head*. Thus in the case of the promises made to Abraham, we see that the Holy Ghost sometimes refers those promises to *Christ*, as the seed of Abraham;^d and sometimes they are applied to the more general posterity of Abraham, as when it is said, that his seed shall be as the stars of heaven or the sand upon the sea shore for multitude.^e And this same promise of a countless multitude, as a seed, has an ultimate reference to that *spiritual* seed, who are believers in Christ and partakers of the faith of Abraham, which is in other words the *members* of Christ;^f so that the promises are made *through* Christ the head unto the members, who

are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,^g and viewed by the foreknowledge of Jehovah as *in* Christ;—as it is written in Psalm cxxxix, “Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

We shall consequently find *Israel* spoken of, in his covenant relation to God, as *one man*, the reference being sometimes to the members, sometimes to the head. For example, Psalm cxi is addressed throughout to some individual person, in the same manner as Psalm xci, and the application is generally made primarily to Christ; but this person is in the 4th verse evidently *Israel*. So the words in Hosea xi. 1—“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt,” are applied by St. Matt. to Christ;^h but the context of Hosea xi shews, that the primary application of the subject by the prophet is to Israel in the aggregate; and Matt. therefore can only apply it to Christ on the principle, that there is an identification of the head with the members. Once more St. Paul speaks of the spiritual Israel, as including both Jew and Gentile, as if they constituted but one individual, and this by virtue of union with their covenant *head*, Christ; so that those (he says) who were before “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were in Christ Jesus made nigh,”—who had made “in himself of twain *one new man*”;—“reconciling both unto God in *one body* by the cross.”ⁱ In which place observe, that the whole are accounted to be *Israel*; but they are accounted so, as being now the *one body of Christ*.

Now it is this *one man*, I appre-

^a 1 Cor. i. 27; Ephes. iv. 12; Col. i. 18. ^b Luke xxiv. 44. ^c Acts ii. 25—36.
^d Gal. iii. 16. ^e Gen. xiii. 16; xv. 5, ^f Rom. iv. 12 and 18. ^g Rom. viii. 17.
^h Matt. ii. 15. ⁱ Ephes. ii. 12—16.

head,—alluded to sometimes in the head, sometimes in the members, sometimes in the entire,—who in the Psalms confesses sins, who walks in righteousness, who receives promises, who expresses confidence, who experiences deliverance, and in whom the whole word of God is fulfilled. The righteousness belongs to the head; the sin belongs only to the members; excepting that it is *by imputation* laid upon the head. This will reconcile the difficulty, so often felt by some, in regard to *confession of sin*, in Psalms which evidently apply to Christ; but which sins he never could have experienced himself: and also in regard to the apparent application of righteousness to man, which other Scriptures shew does not belong to any man but Jesus; and which can only be imputed to others by virtue of their union with Christ. It is the viewing the Israel of God in this union, that leads the Spirit to say of him—"God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord *his* God is with him, the shout of a king is among *them*."^k—in which place observe, the reference is first to Israel in the singular number ("*him*") being viewed in the headship, either as Jacob, or Jacob's seed, Christ; and then in the plural number, ("*them*") being viewed in the members. In like manner also, dangers and deliverances are sometimes spoken of, which the Lord did not personally experience; but the *Church* either has or will experience them, and thus fill up in the members, what was behind hand of the sufferings of Christ.¹

2. Secondly, I consider the speaker, when he opens his mouth in *unrighteousness*, or is spoken of as provoking to the uttermost the wrath of God, to be ANTICHRIST: and this in

the head and members, the same as in the instance of Christ.

I need not again proceed to establish the principle in the abstract, that a congregation or body of individuals may be spoken of sometimes in reference to the multitude collectively, and sometimes in reference to their head: this has, I trust, been sufficiently proved in the case of the righteous, and therefore there can be no objection to the application of it to the unrighteous. All that is required will be a few examples in proof of allusion being made sometimes to the head, sometimes to the members of "the synagogue of Satan."

We have an instance then in Psalm VII. In verses 1 & 2 it is: "Save me from all *them* that persecute me, and deliver me; lest *he* tear my soul like a lion, &c." In verses 13—16 it is written: "He (God) hath also prepared for *him* the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the *persecutors*. (pl.) Behold *he* travaileth with iniquity &c." Another instance is in Habakkuk III. 13, 14 "Thou woundedst the *head* out of the house of the wicked &c.: Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of *his* villages: *they* came out as a whirlwind to scatter me; *their* rejoicing was to devour the poor secretly." The head here, if the context be considered, is evidently the same to whom chap. II is chiefly addressed, as to an individual—"Yea also because *he* transgresseth by wine, a proud man, neither keepeth at home, (i. e. within bounds,) who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, &c." It again is evidently the same as in Psalm cx. 6—"He shall wound the *head* over many countries."^{*}

^k Numb. XXIII. 21. ¹ Col. I. 24.

* The original is ראש in the singular number, not *heads* as in our translation. The

3. I would finally observe, that various considerations induce me to view the prophetic portion of the Psalms as having principally a reference to the great crisis of the last days. There is doubtless a reference in them, in most instances, to the passing circumstances of David; who is, in relation to the ultimate object of the Spirit, merely a type. There is likewise a reference to the times of the first advent of Christ; because, as before stated, he declares that the Psalms speak of him, and they are applied to him by the Apostle: but in this instance the fulfilment is not complete, there being numerous circumstances which remain yet to be accomplished. It is further evident, from the very general use made of the Psalms by the Church in all ages,* that they are most of them susceptible of application to passing circumstances, which at any time may affect the believer politically or individually; and it is probable that the Psalms, and some of the more directly prophetic portions of Scripture, have been designedly couched in such terms as will enable the believer thus to apply them to the spiritual condition of the Church or of himself, that they may be profitable to the saints in all ages. But it will be equally evident, to him who desires to make a strict and satisfactory application of the whole of the Psalms, that they cannot in this way have received any thing like a full accomplishment. And if not a jot or tittle shall pass from the word of God, but all must be fulfilled, there must still be some period when the whole shall receive its comple-

tion in the fullest sense. For even those circumstances, to which portions of the Psalms have appeared applicable, (as, for example, former periods of apostasy and ungodliness,) have not been so intense in degree, or so complete in particulars, as to come up to the colouring of the prophet; which has given occasion to some to conclude, that the Holy Ghost employs the language of exaggeration, and exceeds the bounds of sobriety and truth, for the sake of indulging in rhetorical ornament:—an idea most derogatory to the truth and holiness of God!

The real fact however appears to be, that the deficiency, in the instances just adverted to, of the events as compared with the description, arises from their not being the events which are ultimately contemplated by the Spirit; and the fulfilment therefore will never be equal in reality to the *language* of the Spirit, until that crisis arrives which is principally in the *mind* of the Spirit. For, to advert once more to the description of the apostate and ungodly, there never has been a period when the characteristics of the wicked have not been more or less visible in individuals. Even that awful picture given in Romans iii. 10—18, which is made up of quotations gathered from the Psalms and the Prophets, is declared by St. Paul to be specially addressed to those that were under the Law, and applicable to the character of man, and to the Jews in particular, throughout the legal dispensation. And these same things being thus quoted and brought before us in the Gospel, appeal in like

Septuagint has it plural, *καθαλας*: and it is remarkable in how many instances the Sept. changes the singular of the Hebrew into the plural.

* There exist considerably more than 200 published expositions or paraphrases of the Psalms; about one half of which are contained in commentaries on the whole of the Scriptures, and are in many instances compiled; but the larger moiety may be considered as original, and have been published independently.

manner to those who are *under the Gospel*; and do not only warn us of the true character of every unconverted man in this present dispensation, but do likewise find their archetypes and counterparts actually existing in every period of it: just as St. John said of his own age—"Even *now* are there many *anti-christs*."^m But though these originals of the picture are to be found in individuals, they are not generally the *national* features of those who are either under the Law or Gospel; and therefore, as they describe the unbelieving and impenitent in the aggregate, they are but as faint sketches of what appears in times of crisis. It is when a church or people has been given over to fill up the measure of their iniquity, when the ungodly come into power and prosper on every side, that the evil fruits of sin begin every where to develope themselves and come rapidly to maturity. Thus the latent seeds of sin and apostasy, which are in the heart of every unconverted man, are forced into speedy growth by national corruption, and iniquity presently abounds. This was the case with the whole world previous to the flood;—it was the case with the Jewish Church at the time of the Babylonish captivity and at the time of the overthrow of the Jews by Titus;ⁿ and it will be the character of the Christian Church just before the coming of our Lord.^o Now that the former periods of corruption and of judgement were nevertheless not that particular crisis of apostasy ultimately intended, I will give one proof by way of illustration. I exclude from this observation the instance of the flood, because neither Law nor Gospel were formally set forth in those days, and those lively oracles, which are now

our light and guidance, were not then existing. Let us however glance at a passage or two in Psalm xxxvii. The 19th verse shews, that it is written for an "*evil time*;" and the Psalm throughout exhorts the saints how to walk in patience and hope under the provocations and temptations which they will experience from the ungodly during those "*perilous days*;" and they are buoyed up by the assurance, that the ungodly shall be cut off and rooted out of the earth, and the meek alone shall inherit it. Now though, as I have before admitted, such passages may have armed the people of God with patience in *every* time when the wicked have had the ascendancy, and thus have constantly proved profitable; yet have we never seen sinners consumed or rooted out of the earth, neither the righteous generally exalted to the high heritages thereof. It still continues to be the hour of the prince of this world and of the powers of darkness. The righteous have indeed often been themselves involved in the national judgements which have fallen on the wicked; and frequently the church has been persecuted unto blood, and the wicked has obtained the upper hand, and the *righteous* has been nearly consumed out of the land, and the ungodly have prospered and come not into trouble during life, and there has apparently been no bands in his death. The crisis spoken of in this Psalm cannot therefore, from its very nature, apply strictly to any other than the last days, when "*every thing that offends and does iniquity shall be rooted out*," and "*the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day*."

I will now proceed to the Psalms themselves, stating first what I conceive to be—

^m 1 John ii. 18.

ⁿ See 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

^o Matt. xxiv. 12.

THE ARGUMENT

OF THE PSALMS IN GENERAL.

They treat of the congregation of the righteous and the congregation of the wicked; setting forth their respective characters and proceedings; and especially the signs or evidences by which the former may be assured, that they are the children of God and shall have peace. They describe the characteristics of that great confederacy, which the apostates of the last days will enter into against the righteous, their temporary success, and the suffering and oppression of the righteous under it. They describe the manner in which the righteous are sustained under the tribulation; how it proves a means of more entirely abasing them before God, and of purging away their dross. They point out the final deliverance of the righteous; and, on the other hand, the doom of the ungodly.

They of course treat likewise of the respective *heads* over each. We have the temporary humiliation of the one, and his sufferings for the brethren, whereby redemption is purchased for them; and we have his ultimate exaltation and triumph over his own and his people's enemies, bringing them the complete salvation they are promised. We have the arrogance and despotism of the other for a time, with his ultimate overthrow and destruction.

And as the Psalms abound with complaints and supplications from the saints under their sufferings; so do they also continually set forth the praises and thanksgivings which will proceed from them, when they shall be finally delivered, and the earth also, from the effects of sin and Satan and the curse; for no book brings before us in more lively colors the blessed effects of the time of the restitution of all things, spoken of by all the prophets.

PSALM I.

1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

Here is declared the blessedness of the man who keeps from those principles, (or *counsel*,) and from those ways, and lusts not for that power, (or *seat*) which will distinguish the infidels and apostate scorners that form the congregation of Satan.

My object is to be brief; but I must necessarily, when certain expressions come before me for the first time, take the opportunity to explain them; which will cause my notice of the earlier Psalms to be somewhat more extended.

This verse then describes the *blessedness* of the man who is enabled through grace "to keep himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." To be accounted *blessed* is actually to be accounted immortal—the heir of everlasting life. It is not the same expression as is made use of when man is said to *bless God*,—the meaning of which is to praise and to extol him: this is God *blessing man*, and declaring, not that he has any thing to praise man for, but that he is "passed from death unto life." The same expression, by which the original is rendered in the Septuagint, is used by our Lord in his sermon on the mount, Matt. v. 11; and therefore it is very evident what is meant by being *blessed*—viz. "they shall obtain mercy," "they shall be called the children of God," "they shall see God," "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," "they shall inherit the earth &c." Nothing can separate such from the love of God: hear the Psalmist's own explanation of the matter;—"Thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be *blessed for ever*." ^p

Those who would limit every thing in the Psalms concerning the right-

eous to Christ, in his individual person, allege, that because the singular number is here used, the blessedness must necessarily be referred only to Him. But here the first of the principles I have laid down must be brought to bear on the subject; which is confirmed by verse 6, where the righteous is in the original in the *plural*; shewing, that however the Psalm may primarily apply to the head, it applies also to the members who have his mind and spirit, and walk in his footsteps.^q

v. 2. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

Two things are here predicated. The first is, the *evidence* that the man here spoken of is really partaker of the covenant of grace, and has the witness of the Spirit: *His delight is in the Law of the Lord.* "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, &c."^r This is the essential witness of the Spirit, when any can say, like St. Paul,—"*I delight in the law of God after the inward man*;"—"So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God."^s It shews that "*the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost*;" which is laid down as the great evidence that we are begotten to a "*hope that maketh not ashamed*:"^t "*for this is the love of God,—that we keep his commandments.*"^u Similar are the Psalmist's own words: "*Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.*"^v

The other thing to be here noticed is, the *means* by which the blessed are enabled to test and to resist the counsel of the ungodly; viz.—*in*

God's law doth he meditate day and night. Thus he declares in another place, "*Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*"^w "*Princes also did sit and speak against me; but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.*"^x

This is a most important warning to us in the present day; especially in our national and political affairs. The counsel of many in such matters is directly in opposition to the word of God, and they would scoff down those who would remind them of his law, insisting that it has nothing to do with public affairs. Many to obtain the seat of authority will advocate any principles, however abhorrent from divine revelation. Principles which they themselves deprecated in time past, they will unblushingly avow, merely because they are what they call *political* principles; and they conceive that a man may advocate what he pleases in politics, without offending the majesty of God. If indeed it be the voice of the people, they will insist that it is the voice of God, however contradictory it may be to his revealed word. Ah! it is a sign that judgment is at hand, when God is thus unblushingly betrayed by professing christians: "*It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law.*"^y Oh! let the godly consider this: let them remember "*that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"^z By taking heed to this is the only way by which they can cleanse their way,^a and keep them from the paths of the destroyer: though the proud have them greatly in derision, let them not decline from God's law;^b but "*let them in*

^q Rom. iv. 12—16; 1 Cor. ii. 16.

^r Heb. viii. 10.

^s Rom. vii. 22, 25.

^t Rom. v. 5.

^u 1 John v. 3.

^v Ps. cxix. 6.

^w Ps. xvii. 4.

^x Ps. cxix. 23, 24.

^y Ps. cxix. 126.

^z Deut. viii. 3.

^a Ps. cxix. 9.

^b Ps. cxix. 51.

the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world, *hold forth the word of life.*"^c

vv. 3, 4. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, [or rather water courses,] that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

This further describes the respective characters of the two parties here spoken of, but with a special reference to religious apostasy. The righteous not only has the leaf of profession, but he also is enabled to bring forth fruit; and perseveres in well doing, and remains green, even in times of abounding iniquity and of fiery trial; for his soul is continually nourished by an inward supply of grace, just as a tree planted near a river has its roots, even in times of parching heat and drought, refreshed by the waters which saturate the adjacent earth in their passage. There is no growing weary in well doing, no declining in zeal after the excitement of the moment: their character is, that they bring forth fruit in old age, continue fat and flourishing,^d and their last works are more than their first.^e Thus they prove to be "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified,"^f

The ungodly professors are the reverse of this: they are "trees whose fruit withereth, *without* fruit."^g There can be no better description of the contrast between the two than that contained in Jeremiah xvii. 5—8, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the

heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

The original of the Psalm is very emphatic when proceeding to the contrast: "*Not so the ungodly, not so.*" But instead of describing in this place the withering trees, the reference is to *chaff*; which points more particularly to that great period of tribulation and judgment, when the Lord's fan shall be in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his *floor*,^h when all that are not true wheat shall be entangled by "the deceivableness of unrighteousness,"ⁱ and become "as a rolling thing before the whirlwind."^k The next verse *proves* that the reference is to this period—

v. 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.—No, the Lord will gather his wheat into his garner, but he will gather out of his kingdom all things which offend and do iniquity, and burn them as chaff, or as tares, with unquenchable fire.

The term *Judgment* is evidently used here in its proper two-fold sense: viz. a time of retribution on the ungodly, when every plant that our heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up;^l and a time when the Lord shall "receive the congregation and judge uprightly"—that is, introduce a reign of righteousness and peace. For the scriptural view of the *judgment* I must refer to my

^c Phil. ii. 15. ^h Matt. xiii. 12.

^d Psalm xcii. 14. ^l 2 Thess. ii. 10.

^e Rev. ii. 19. ^f Isa. lxi. 3. ^g Jude 12. ^k Isa. xvii. 13. ^l Matt. xv. 13.

paper in the Investigator Vol. I, p. 173.*

v. 6. *For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous ; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

Here is affirmed more clearly the reason why the righteous endure to the end : it is of *grace*. There is a remarkable illustration of this in 2 Tim. II. The apostle speaks of those who are drawn into apostasy by vain babblings, which increase unto more ungodliness and consume like a cancer ; and he instances Hymenæus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying, that the *resurrection* is passed already,† and *overthrow the faith* of some ; (“ the way of the ungodly shall perish : ”) “ Nevertheless (he adds) the *foundation of God* standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his.*” The seal is affixed as a pledge and earnest;‡ and “ *The Lord knoweth &c.*” is as it were the device or motto on it. Now in one sense we may say, “ known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world ; ” and yet in Amos III. 2, He says of Israel—“ You only have I known of all the families of the earth : ” which must mean, that he had known them in some special manner—he had walked among them, revealed himself to them, and shewn them particular favor. But even out of these there were some whom he knew still more intimately, (viz. his spiritual people,)—revealing himself to their hearts

and causing them to know and delight in Him.—For when the Lord is said to *know* any, it means that by his Spirit he has brought them to a blessed knowledge of himself. We cannot strictly be said to *know* a man, merely because we are acquainted with his name or person, or have spoken to him : to *know* him implies, that we are admitted to his friendship. Thus there is spiritual communion and intercourse between those whom the Lord knows : the Lord manifesting himself to the believer, as he does not to the world ;§ and the believer revealing himself to the Lord and confessing his ways before him. He knows the Lord also by his power and faithfulness in the hour of need. Now that for any thus to know God is the same as his knowing them, is evident from Gal. iv. 9,—“ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, &c : ” in which the Apostle explains the one as equivalent to the other ; preferring however to speak of it rather as *God’s knowing them*, because it is the Spirit who must first “ *shine* into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”¶

For the Lord then thus “ to *know* the way of the righteous,” and to have revealed himself to them, is “ the earnest of their inheritance.” To the rest he will say—“ I never *knew* ye : depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

ABDIEL.

* The word translated *stand*, is in the original to *rise again*. It is the same word that is translated in Isaiah xxvi. 19—“ Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they *arise*.” It is also the same word in the Septuagint that is used in the New Testament to signify rising from the dead. In this view it would mean that the ungodly should not at the time of the judgment and the gathering of the righteous be made partakers of the *resurrection* ; and is further collateral proof of the doctrine of the *first resurrection*.

† Mr. Begg of Glasgow has printed an interesting little Treatise, shewing that this error was a denial of the doctrine of the *first* resurrection, which they maintained was *spiritual* only.

‡ Ephes. I, 13, 14.

§ John xiv. 22.

¶ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

We are happy in being enabled to present to our readers, in the first number of our New Series, the commencement of an exposition of the Apocalypse by Mr. FRERE; with the promise, if health permits, of its being regularly continued: though we greatly regret to add, that this able writer suffers so much at times from indisposition, as to compel him to qualify his promise in this respect.

The readers of our last Volume will be aware, that we do not coincide with Mr. Frere in some important particulars of that portion of his exposition, which is already published; and therefore we wish it to be understood, that we do not bring this exposition forward as containing our *own* sentiments; but as being the opinions of a writer, whose reputation stands high with many as an interpreter of prophecy, and whose sentiments we consider entitled to regard.

We take this opportunity also of correcting a mistake which crept inadvertently into our Review of Mr. Frere's works. At page 356 we stated, that he applies Daniel xi. 19, to Antiochus *Epiphanes*; we should have said Antiochus *Magnus*; for in one of the works of Mr. Frere, enumerated by us at the head of that review, he labours to prove that Antiochus *Epiphanes* is *not* the subject of that prophecy. Mr. Frere has likewise called our attention to another point—viz. that he does not make "the kings of the North and South," (Dan. ix. 27) to be the *Pope and the Emperor*, but "*the prince of the Covenant*" and *the king of the South*. We are not aware of any essential difference that this makes in our remarks—Mr. F. says p. 385 of his Combined View: "I

'conceive that the verse now before us is to be understood as relating to the affairs of the prince of the Covenant, or the Pope, &c.—he again confederated with the *Emperor*, for it is said, that *both these kings*' hearts were set to do mischief, and that they speak lies at one table." It was this which led us to say that Mr. F. made the two kings *the pope and the emperor*.

Mr. F. in reference to our observations on Britain being the elect nation, and on the infidel antichrist, states, that he does not change in his interpretation, in consequence of the death of Buonaparte and his son, neither on account of the present political prospect of Britain; for he always concluded that Britain would be preserved till the outpouring of the seven vials, but no longer; and he thinks that the prophecy respecting antichrist will still be enigmatically fulfilled. We forbear however to pursue the subject; as our remarks will be unintelligible to our new readers, and Mr. Frere will soon have an opportunity of expounding his views.

We have stated in our review, that we were the less able to judge of Mr. F.'s opinions, from his never having published a regular exposition of the Apocalypse, which desideratum he is now about to supply; and whatever difference of opinion either our Readers or we ourselves may entertain in regard to some portion of Mr. Frere's views, we are persuaded that they will feel with us, on the perusal of this first portion of his Exposition, that there is much in it which tends to edification, and that he treats his subject with a masterly hand.

EDITOR.

INTERPRETATION OF CHAPTER I.

Amongst the evidences to the truth of Christianity, *prophecy* has always held a conspicuous place, and may be considered as affording a demonstration of it, even superior to that of miracles themselves: for we derive our knowledge of these only from the testimony of others, handed down to us from remote periods; whereas the fulfilment of a series of prophecies, by the occurrence of events which God alone could have foreseen, is a continued miracle, which becomes the more striking and undeniable, the farther we are removed from the times in which the predictions were given; and is one to which we ourselves are partly witnesses. May we not say, therefore, of those who will not yield to such an evidence,—“Neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

The external evidence, however, which the word of prophecy affords to the truth of Christianity, appears, comparatively speaking, to be only a secondary and incidental use of it; for as in the natural creation the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work, so it bears witness indeed to his eternal power and godhead, but witnesses in vain to an unbelieving world. The work of creation would have been incomplete, in reference to immortal beings, had it not been accompanied by the institution of the sabbath, which, like the word of prophecy, is a token that God desires to hold intercourse with his creatures. And it is only when viewing prophecy in this its most interesting light, as the special gift of Christ to his own servants, that we can derive that blessedness from the inestimable gift of the Revelation of St. John, which is pronounced upon all those who shall read it aright, and keep its sayings.

It is in this view therefore that we shall be led to consider this divine book; and when I regret, that it should have been hitherto studied to such little effect, and that it is as yet so imperfectly known, it is not so much because the Church has lost, for a long period, the gratification to be derived from the consideration of the wisdom displayed in the perfect simplicity, yet admirable contrivance, of its outward structure,—and the living evidence to the infinite power and foreknowledge of God, displayed in the striking fulfilment of its various predictions, (though these be great deprivations);—but rather that they should be so inadequately acquainted with it, *as an evidence of the love of Christ to his people*. May he who gave it, and who will reveal it, at such times and in such degrees as seems best to his infinite wisdom, bless the feeble attempt which I now make simply to communicate something of the divine instruction it contains!

Having been disappointed, by circumstances over which I have had no control, in my intention of filing up that outline which I gave of its structure twenty years ago, it is my wish, in doing this in as brief a manner as is practicable, to endeavour to save from entire oblivion those interpretations, to which, I am myself fully persuaded, my understanding was formerly opened in answer to earnest prayer. Not that prophecy was the object, but that I desired that I might *in some way or other* be made useful to that Church which God had purchased with his own blood, and might have something to look back upon in another world as done in this to the honor of his holy Name.

To the Church on earth the explaining the real meaning of this

book were an event, second in importance only to the original communication of it : and if I have any cause to fear, lest it should not now be attended to, I am satisfied that it will be hereafter : for I am assured that it is amongst those things which even the angels desire to look into ; for the heavens resounded with their songs of praise, and with those of the departed saints, when its seven seals were about to be opened ; and they ever desire to investigate the mysteries of Christ's love to his Church. It may also be a subject of contemplation in a future state ; and in the heavenly Canaan the map of the journey of the Church through the wilderness of this world many never be removed from our view.

Verse 1. This book is stated to be "*the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him,*" because the Church could receive nothing from God but through the mediatorial office of the Saviour ;—most forcibly pointing out, that man, being a sinner, has no access to God but through Christ ; neither can God, consistently with the glory of his attributes, confer any blessing upon us but through the same channel.

The doctrine of Scripture (as implicitly followed by the established Church of England, and by all other orthodox communions,) is, that in God there is a plurality of persons without division of substance, and an unity of substance without confusion of persons. But this is a truth relating to spiritual things which the finite mind is not capable of embracing as a whole, and which can only be presented to it in its separate parts, which are each therefore to be understood according to the analogy of faith. Thus St. John in the opening of his gospel says—"In the beginning was the word"—"the

word was God"—"all things were made by him,"—in which sentences the godhead of Christ and his unity with God the Father, the creator of all things, is affirmed. Blended with these plain declarations he also says, "the word was *with* God"—"and *without* him was not anything made that was made;" in which expressions the plurality of persons in the godhead is shewn. In like manner when we read the foregoing passage, in which God the Father is described as giving the book to Christ, that he might in his mediatorial office communicate it to his Church, we must not so understand it, as if in his divine nature Christ, who receives, were distinct from, or other than, God who gives it : for Christ declares that he and his Father are one,—that he that hath seen him hath seen the Father,—and that whatsoever the Father doeth, that doeth the Son likewise. And if it is said in the first verse of the Revelation, that God the Father gave it to Christ ; we find immediately afterwards, that Christ assumes to himself all the attributes of God the Father,—revealing himself to St. John as "the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."

In one sense therefore we say, that Jesus Christ, who in his mediatorial capacity is said to receive the book to communicate it to his Church, is the same as God who gives it ; the apparent contradiction, which is involved in this, arising only from the impossibility of either words or symbols fully explaining to finite minds truths relating to the infinite and eternal God. That which is thus declared in words, as to the way in which the book of revelation was communicated to the Church, we find symbolically represented in a subsequent part of it, where "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," or "the

Lamb that had been slain," receives it from the right hand of him that sitteth on the throne; and in the sight of the glorified Church and assembled angels looses the seven seals thereof.

It is here said to be given to Christ, *that he might shew it unto his SERVANTS*; which is in accordance with the former observation, that prophecy is addressed to the Church of Christ, and not to the world. O unwise and unthankful Church! acknowledge then the value of the communication. Read the address,—for unto you it is sent; and strive diligently to make yourselves acquainted with its meaning; for it contains an account of his purposed judgments upon the world, and the means by which he will bring his Church through sufferings to glory, and ultimately vindicate their cause by the entire destruction of their enemies.

Though the predictions contained in this book would, according to the common acceptation of the term, be considered as occupying a long space of time in their fulfilment, they are viewed as already fulfilled in the eyes of Him with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and will be viewed as equally certain in their accomplishment by the faithful Church, who know that God is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but that this delay affords the means for the more full developement of his faithfulness and his mercy towards them, and of his long suffering and righteous judgments towards hardened and impenitent sinners.

So that however protracted or severe the trials of the Church may be, collectively as well as individually; they will consider them only as light afflictions which are but for a moment, and be assured that their deliverance will "*shortly come to pass.*" And we find that the whole of the long period during which the Church should suffer by Pagan persecution, is termed (Rev. vi. 11) "*a little season.*" We have further to consider, that though the infliction of the judgment upon the papal and infidel Roman empire, by which it will be finally and entirely destroyed, has been long deferred; yet the destruction of the then persecuting Roman empire, and the breaking of it up into ten parts, in vindication of the blood of the martyrs, (which may justly be regarded as typical of its future more complete destruction; and which is predicted by the first seals and trumpets, as being amongst the things which must shortly come to pass;) did take place soon after the vision was seen. In the same manner, the declaration of our Lord, that the judgments to be inflicted upon his enemies at his coming in power, should be fulfilled before the generation he addressed should have passed away;* or the similar one—that of *that* generation should be required all the righteous blood that had been shed on the earth from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah; was verified in the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple, and by the utter dispersion of the nation: this event being a type and anticipa-

* We conceive, that it has been fully established by various writers in our former volumes, that the destruction of Jerusalem was not the event intended in the prophecy of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 30, Mark xiii. 26, Luke xxi. 27, by the expression "*coming* in the clouds with great power and glory;" which is what we presume Mr. Frere alludes to.—But the reader will see his views further stated on verse 7. Neither do we think that our Lord, when he said—" *this generation* shall not pass away till all be fulfilled," meant, that all should come to pass before all the men existing at that time should die. See the meaning of this phrase discussed at pages 53 and 376 of vol. i. and page 341 of vol. iv. See a paper also by E. in this number,—Ed.

tion of the more complete destruction of all his enemies, at the end of the gentile dispensation.

But who is the "*Angel*" or messenger here spoken of, employed by Christ to communicate this vision to the Church, and *by* whom we are told that "*he sent and signified it to his servant John.*" The word *angel* in the Apocalypse and other Scriptures, is variously applied, either to Christ himself, as the angel of the covenant,—to the unfallen angels, as the ministering spirits, appointed to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation,—to the bishops or ministers of the seven Churches of Asia,—or, as in the passage before us,—to the church in heaven, the spirits of the departed saints: for upon further examination we shall find, that the angel here employed to communicate and explain the vision to St. John, is subsequently designated as "one of the elders,"^a as "one of the four living creatures" or cherubim,^b as "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials" and lastly as a "fellow servant"^c of St. John and one of his *brethren* to whom is committed the testimony of Jesus;^d or as he elsewhere calls himself "one of his *brethren* the prophets, and of them which keep (laid up in their hearts) the sayings of this book,"^e as containing the promise of their future reward. This description could properly apply only to one of the spirits of the just made perfect; and none but the Church of all the inhabitants of heaven could indeed address Christ in the words of the song used by the Elders and Cherubim who show the vision to the Apostle: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings

' and priests."^f So that we find here revealed, not only the *future* privileges of the Church, but those also which they enjoy in the *intermediate state*: and we are not only practically informed of the truth of the declaration of the Apostle, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, but also that to be present with Christ is to be made partaker with him in all the offices, which in his mediatorial capacity are conferred upon him by God the Father. Is Christ a *king*?—Is he a *priest*?—so also it is expressly declared by the redeemed church in heaven, that they have been made "kings and priests" unto God;^g and as he himself sustains through the Holy Spirit the *prophetical* office, as the teacher and instructor of his Church on earth, so it appears by the instance before us, that he bestows *this* office also upon his glorified Church in heaven, and employs one of them to communicate this revelation to St. John.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, the prophetic visions appear to have been shewn to Daniel by *Gabriel*, one of the unfallen angels; and now, in the fact here made known, that under the New Testament dispensation the like office is conferred on the church of the departed saints, we receive an intimation of the new privileges obtained by them at the death and resurrection of Christ; and a similar intimation is perhaps given, where we are told by the evangelist, that at that time the graves were opened and many dead bodies of the saints arose and went into the Holy City Jerusalem.^h Thus does this very first verse, as illustrated by other passages, open to us an extensive view of the present privileges and glory of the redeemed Church!

^a Rev. vii. 13. ^b Rev. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7.

^c Rev. xxii. 9. ^f Rev. v. 9, 10.

^e Rev. xvii. 1; xxi. 9. ^d Rev. xix. 10.

^g Rev. v. 10. ^h Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

Verse 2. John, the highly favoured and beloved disciple, had already in his gospel borne testimony to the divine nature of him whose name is called "*the Word of God*;" and now, both at the commencement and termination of the Apocalypse, he "*bare record*" of his personal revelation as the same divine Word. This apostle formed, as it were, a connecting link between two dispensations. He had witnessed the fulfilment of the predictions of our Lord concerning his first act of vengeance in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the Jewish economy; and was thus enabled to realize, what he was now called upon to testify to others,—viz. that he would be equally faithful to his word, in coming hereafter in power to the destruction of the apostate Gentile church and nations. He testified also to his final manifestation, when, seated on the great white throne of his glory, he shall judge both men and angels.

Thus did he *bear record "of the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

He bare record also of "*all things that he saw*" in vision relating to the apostasy of the Gentile Church, its persecution of the true Church, the preservation of the latter through the special protection of God, and of the judgements to be inflicted upon all its successive persecutors.

Verse 3. In the blessing here pronounced upon *him that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy*, we have a recognition of its being designed to be the subject of social converse and instruction; in the same manner as Israel was directed to write the precepts of the law delivered by Moses on the door posts of their houses, to bind them as frontlets between their eyes, and to make them the subject of their daily discourse. This precept, the Pharisees, though spiritually blind,

endeavoured to fulfil to the letter; but so little have the words of St. John, addressed to the spiritual Church of Christ, been noted, that this book—distinguished from all other Scripture by the blessings with which it is introduced, and the awful sanctions with which it closes—is generally more neglected as a source of divine instruction than any other, and in reference to public or social worship, it is hardly too much to say that it is altogether proscribed.

They are pronounced *blessed* however, who do read and hear it, and keep those things which are written therein; because "*the time*" of Christ's coming "*is at hand*." Its tendency then is obviously to keep us detached from the world, waiting for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And then, no wonder that such great advantages are said to accompany its perusal: for those who thus confess, that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, are entitled to all the privileges of time and eternity, and "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city," even "the new Jerusalem that cometh down from God out of heaven. Blessed then is "*he that keepeth the things which are written therein*" treasured up in his mind, as promises which intimately concern himself. Blessed indeed is every one, that thus believes; for there shall be a performance of those things that are here told him from the Lord. And if, in the days of the Apostles, the realizing power of faith, the evidence of things not seen as yet, caused the time of these events to appear, as if already "*at hand*;" how ought not *our* faith to be invigorated, and our expectations enlivened by the consideration, that the day of the deliverance of the Church is now so much nearer, as

shewn by the fulfilment of a regular series of predictions, some of which our own eyes have witnessed, relative to previous and preparatory events.

Verse 4. As most of the apostolic epistles, and those of St. John himself,—though addressed to single churches, and even to individuals,—were providentially preserved to be to the end of time the sources of spiritual light, and the means of grace to the *universal church*; so the Apocalypse, though designed for the Church at large, is addressed immediately by St. John to the seven churches which were in proconsular Asia, over which he is considered to have exercised a particular jurisdiction: and the preference thus given (as elsewhere in the Apocalypse) to the Eastern Church above the Western, has reference probably to the fact, that it is hereafter to be the seat of the millennial church.

That the universal Church however is addressed *through* them, is indicated by their number "*seven*," which denotes completeness and universality, like a square or cube, or any complete number; being, (as will be recognised by arithmeticians, and as is confirmed by the three portions, into which the seven seals and the seven trumpets are found to be respectively divided) the sum of the most simple series of geometrical progression 1, 2, 4, limited to three terms. On these churches, as representing the whole church, St. John bestows his benediction, wishing them "*grace and peace*" from God the Father, here described in his self-existent and eternal Godhead, as the great "I AM," he "*which is and which was and which is to come*;" and from the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to illuminate the universal church, and who

is therefore in this and a subsequent passage spoken of, as "*the seven spirits which are before his throne*" and who are "sent forth into all the earth," or into all the churches of the earth.

That the Holy Spirit is usually mentioned the third in order of the divine persons of the Trinity, may be supposed to have reference to the order in which they have been manifested to man;—God the Father as our Creator, God the Son as our Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier. So the Jewish dispensation may be considered, as that in which God the Father was chiefly known as their king and law-giver;—the Gentile dispensation as that in which God the Son was chiefly revealed in his humiliation, as the redeemer of his Church;—and the Millennial dispensation, as that in which the Holy Spirit will be manifested in all his powerful operations upon the hearts of both Jew and Gentile.

That in the present instance this order is altered, proves the essential equality of the three persons in the Godhead, and appears to have reference to the lengthened doxology which immediately follows upon the mention of the name of Christ, with whose name the benediction now closes.

Verses 5, 6. "*And from Jesus Christ, who is (alone) the faithful witness*" to man of those heavenly things which he hath heard and seen with his Father, and who having suffered for our sins became "*the first begotten of the dead*;" for St. Paul informs us that Christ, is become the "*first fruits*" of them that slept; and that "if the spirit of 'him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in us, he that raised up 'Christ from the dead shall also 'quicken our mortal bodies by his

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 23.

'spirit that dwelleth in us.'^k He is also become "*the prince of the kings of the earth*;" all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth to subdue all the adversaries of the Church,—whether they be spiritual powers or the princes of this world, who were gathered together against the holy child Jesus, when he came in a state of humiliation, and will again be gathered together against him to their own destruction at the great day of Armageddon, when he shall be manifested in all his glory and power as "king of kings and lord of lords" or "*prince of the kings of the earth*."

St. John, like St. Paul in his Epistles, upon the mention of the name of Christ, and of the various relations in which he stands towards his Church, is unable, as it were, to restrain his feelings; but interrupting the thread of his discourse, breaks forth into the following doxology—"*Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen*"—thus opening fully to the Church the doctrines of the gospel and shewing the source of all our blessings to be laid in the eternal love of Christ and the sum of all our blessings in the fact of our being washed from our sins, and looked upon by God as guiltless although we be guilty: and as well pleasing in his sight although there be only one of whom God hath ever said, in him "I am well pleased," since first the creation, once pronounced to be good, was marred by sin.

O wisdom! far above that of this world, which revelation alone could have disclosed—"that we should be saved by a righteousness not our own;"—O truth! which, like the rainbow, holds out the only ray of

hope to a condemned world; the imaginations of the thoughts of whose hearts are only evil continually!—which "majestic in its own simplicity" unites into one glorious system all the attributes and perfections of God, and insures personal holiness as far as any doctrine can do: for surely nothing can have a more powerful efficacy to lead us to reflect in our own persons, in some degree, however faint, the graces which shone in the human nature of Christ, than to believe that the reality of them, and the benefit derived from them, is through the grace of God really imputed to us; in like manner as the adjacent cloud reflects in some cases a second faint image of the glories of the bow of the covenant.

In the appellation here given to the church on earth of "*kings and priests*," we have the first interesting exhibition of that entire union, which is shewn throughout the Apocalypse to exist, between the church in heaven, the church on earth, and Christ the head of both. For as he is himself king, priest and prophet, so we have seen that the same three offices are exercised by the Church in heaven; and now in like manner the two first are here directly ascribed to the Church on earth; while the third, or the prophetic, is also implied, in that the book was communicated to St. John, a member of the Church on earth, that in the exercise of this office he might impart it to others.

The characters of king and priest, and that also of prophet, have indeed been united in the Church in all ages: as in Melchizedek king of Salem and priest of the most high God, who prophetically blessed Abraham; and in Abraham himself, the father of the faithful, whose regal character was manifested in his

^k Rom. viii. 11.

victory over the five kings who were given "as the dust to his sword and as the driven stubble to his bow," when God "gave the nations before him and made him rule over kings." We further witness the exercise of the priestly office in his intercession for Sodom, as also in the figurative sacrifice of Isaac on mount Moriah; and of his prophetic office as the teacher of the Church, when God communicated to him the great promise of the future coming of the Messiah, saying, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;" as well as when he declared that he would not hide from him that thing which he was about to do in the destruction of the wicked;—not only because he was according to promise to become a mighty nation, but because he knew, that, as instructor of the Church, he would "command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

In like manner the same three characters must be sustained by all genuine children of Abraham. As princes it is their privilege, even while yet in a state of humiliation, through their prayers to have power with God and with men, and to prevail,—as Jacob did against Esau, or as Elijah, whom God set like Jeremiah and the rest of the prophets "over nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to build and to plant;" and who though "a man subject to like passions as we are, prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." As priests they must make intercession in the name of Christ for blessings upon the church and upon the world. And as prophets, they must bear witness for God, as lights in a dark place, and be the means of giving

moral fertility to the earth. "Such honor (if they did but exercise their privileges) have all the saints."

The elders, in their regal office, are described in chap. iv. as casting down their crowns before the throne of Christ; and the cherubim, in their priestly office, ascribe holiness to Him from whom they derive it: and here St. John, as the representative of the church on earth, having in like manner enumerated their privileges of kings and priests, renders back all the honor to Christ from whom they receive it, ascribing to him, as the sole author of all their salvation and hopes, "*glory and dominion for ever and ever:*" and ratifies this grateful ascription of praise by his solemn "*Amen.*"

Verse 7. The prophet next anticipates the final event to which the ensuing series of prophecy is designed to conduct us, or the glorious manifestation of Christ,—proclaiming, as if viewing the end from the beginning, "*Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him;*" which words will receive their first fulfilment at the battle of Armageddon, when he will come attended by the church in heaven, and rule their enemies with a rod of iron, according to the promise made to the faithful martyrs of Thyatira. The event is described by Daniel in similar terms, "I saw one like the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

The conversion of the Jews appears also to be referred to, as a contemporary event with the premillennial advent, in the declaration of the text—that *they also which pierced him shall now see him*; the prophet Zechariah describing their conversion in these similar terms, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall

'mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.' And it may be observed, that this revelation, being addressed to *Gentile* believers, and relating to that period during which the Jews are excluded from the visible church, the only reference made to that nation is in this prefatory passage.

The description also of the state of the world, as "*wailing because of him*," agrees with its infidel state of universal opposition to Christ at the time of the premillennial advent: to which period I therefore primarily refer it. I cannot however exclude entirely from this passage, or from any similar declaration of the coming of Christ in power, all reference to the final consummation and advent of "*the last day*;" when, in the words of our Lord, "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation;" it appearing to me that in the word of prophecy these several acts of the coming of Christ in power are always more or less blended together in one view. The prophet declares his acquiescence in this manifestation of the righteous judgment of God and final vindication of his own cause and that of his Church in these words, expressive of his earnest desire for his appearing—"Even so, Amen."

Verse 8. In confirmation of these words of his prophet, and as an assurance that they shall be fulfilled, Christ himself next speaks in his own person saying, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.*" Christ, in whose eternal purpose, as being one with the Father, the whole scheme of redemption originated,—who sees the end from

the beginning, and by whose power it will be completely effected,—here gives his sanction to the words of the Apostle; as at the end of the last prophecy of Daniel, and as at the end also of the prophecy of the trumpet history, he is introduced as confirming them by an oath.

The designation here assumed by Christ, as he "*which is and which was and which is to come*,"—being the same as in a preceding verse,—designates God the Father, as distinguished from God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; and proves, not only the unity of Christ with God the Father, but shews also that the revelation of the whole Trinity, as engaged in the covenant of grace and in the work of man's redemption, is here made in the person of Christ. In his regal office, he is the revelation of God the Father as King and Creator.—In his priestly character, he is the revelation of God the Word as our propitiatory sacrifice and Redeemer.—In his prophetic character, he is the revelation of God the Holy Spirit, as the teacher and sanctifier of his Church. This doctrine of the Trinity and of the several offices held by each of the divine persons was evidently taught in the legal dispensation by the three principal feasts of the Jews.—The passover was held in honor of the manifestation of the second person of the Trinity in the flesh, and of his sacrifice for us; and in confirmation of this view we know that it was on the day of the Jewish institution that Christ our passover was sacrificed for us. The feast of Pentecost, or first fruits, was instituted in honor of the manifestation of the third person of the Trinity, as the teacher and sanctifier of the Church; and in confirmation of this we find that it was on the day of this Jewish institution that the Holy Ghost was given, and that spiritual

gifts were conferred on the Church. The feast of tabernacles, instituted, according to the general belief of the Jews, to celebrate the day of creation or in honor of God as King and Creator, (that is of the manifestation of the First person of the Trinity by Christ in his regal character) as yet wants its antitype; but to this completion of all the designs of God which were shadowed forth in the legal dispensation, many of those who are well instructed in the word of God hope to come, (however these hopes may be slighted by others,) assured that not one jot or tittle of either the law or the prophets, commencing with the institutions of Moses and ending with the Revelation of St. John, shall pass away until all be fulfilled.

This declaration, "I am Alpha and Omega," is also from its nature a commencing as well as a terminating text; and, occurring twice subsequently, connects this opening address to the seven churches of the Eastern empire with the conclusion both of the Trumpet history relating to the Eastern empire, Rev. xxi. 6, and of the little open book containing the history of the Church, Rev. xxii. 13.

Verse 9. St. John next begins his narrative of the circumstances under which he saw the vision; designating himself as the *brother and companion in tribulation* of those whom he was about to address. Having himself been made acquainted with suffering, he was the better prepared to "comfort others with the same comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God." The kingdom of Jesus Christ, of which he speaks, being connected with *patience* was one not then manifested; "for what a man possesseth, why doth he yet hope for: but if he possess it not, then doth he with patience wait for it," as a future

inheritance. The present portion of the Church is therefore called "*the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.*"

According to the tradition of the Church, John had virtually suffered martyrdom, by being cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, out of which he was miraculously delivered unhurt; or had been otherwise preserved in life, according to the saying of our Lord concerning him; and he was now suffering banishment in the desert island "*that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*"

Having already borne faithful testimony in his gospel to the glory and divinity possessed by Jesus Christ in heaven before the world was formed, he was privileged to bear testimony in the Apocalypse to the revelation of that glory upon earth; and having been found faithful in that which he had already received, more was committed unto him. He whose love for his master's cause was so great, that, when he was through age incapable of any other service, he used (it is said) to cause himself to be carried to the place of public worship, and there exhort his people in this short sentence—"little children love one another," was now indeed apparently cut off from all means of usefulness. But God, who accepts the desires of the heart,—whose ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts—was pleased, even in this place of his solitary banishment, to make him the instrument of conferring upon the Church one of the most valuable gifts they have ever received;—a book which (though in early times rejected and since much despised, like him whose power and glory it reveals,) must rise in estimation till it shall be acknowledged as altogether lovely. Thus the Christian may often be made the means

of unexpected usefulness ; as we have seen in later times, that it was one in prison, prohibited from the exercise of his public ministry, who pourtrayed for the use of many generations the walk or pilgrimage of the individual christian through " the wilderness of this world."

Verses 10, 11. " *On the Lord's day,*" being that on which he had risen from the dead, and was most wont, even before his ascension, to manifest himself to his Church on earth,—and which has often been experienced by them as a day of peculiar privileges,—St. John, being under the powerful and sensible influence of the Holy Spirit, (like Eze-kiel when he saw the visions of the Lord,) heard suddenly behind him the awful voice of Christ, here compared to that of a trumpet (as it is elsewhere compared to " the sound of many waters,") saying, "*I am Alpha and Omega ; the first and the last : What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven Churches which are in Asia ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*"

The vision to which the attention of the prophet was now called, and with which the revelation properly commences, is calculated to impress us with a deep conviction of the glory of Christ : for (as in that recorded by the prophet Isaiah, when he saw his glory and testified of him,) it is evident that it is the Lord of Hosts—the Almighty and eternal Jehovah, one with the Father—who speaks, and here graciously directs the apostle to write in a book and to send to the seven Churches in Asia, over which he more immediately presided, an account of the vision.

Verses 12—16. The attention of the apostle being arrested by this

voice, he turns round and beholds Christ in a priestly garment walking amidst the seven golden candlesticks situated in the holy place of the temple, which represents the true spiritual church on earth ; intimating thereby his continued and watchful care over it. The *golden girdle* probably answers to the embroidered girdle which the High Priest wore. "*His head and his hairs white like wool, as white as snow,*" agrees with the description given in Daniel of " the ancient of days," "*His eyes as a flame of fire,*" piercing through all concealment, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart ; and "*his feet*" shining with the splendor of molten brass "*as if they burned in a furnace,*" and the awfulness of his voice being *as the sound of the mighty waters of the deep*, form altogether a description of the most sublime nature. And as *he walks amidst the seven candlesticks, or churches*, so he holds in his hand, or keeps under his special protection, "*the seven stars,*" representing the ministers of these churches. While, as THE WORD of GOD, there goeth forth from his mouth "*a sharp two-edged sword ;*" and his countenance as when he revealed himself to St. Paul journeying towards Damascus, "*was as the sun shining in his strength.*" The various particulars of this prefatory vision we will not now notice, as they are again introduced in the epistles to the seven Churches, to each of which Christ addresses himself under some one or more peculiar characteristic derived from it.

Verses 17, 18. The apostle, though he had been wont to repose on the bosom of his Lord and master during his humiliation, was so overcome with the glory of the vision, that straightway there remained no more strength in him, and " he fell at his

feet as dead." But our Lord, manifesting the same love and tenderness as he did after his resurrection towards those whom he still termed his brethren, laid his right hand upon him, saying, "*Fear not, I am the first and the last,*"—possessing infinite and eternal power; and all that power engaged in behalf of my Church. I am "*he that liveth and was dead,*" who have manifested my love to my Church in that I have died for them; and my power, in that I again live, having overcome death, "*and am alive for evermore,*" to make intercession for them, and to obtain in them a like victory; "*and have the keys of hell and of death;*"—all power being given unto me in heaven and in earth, that I may be the author of salvation to all them who believe.

Verse 19. In the directions given to the apostle, as to what he was to write, we have the first regular division of the book into three parts viz. First—*The things which he had seen*, or the vision of Christ as described in the preceding verses 9 to 18. Secondly, "*The things which are*" or the epistles to the seven churches which are in Asia, exhorting them to faithfulness and patience under their sufferings during the period of Pagan persecution contained in chaps. II, III. And, thirdly, "*The things which shall be hereafter,*" commencing with chap. IV. (where they are called "things which must be hereafter") and of which the remainder of the volume consists.

And here I cannot but notice the error of the Church in failing to acknowledge the general chronological character of the book, so clearly pointed out in this first designation of it, as consisting of the past introductory vision, the present afflicted state of the persecuted churches, and the future vindication of their cause by Christ. For however numerous

the interpretations which have appeared, there has been no *chronological* one: no commentator, as far as I am acquainted, having before myself, in the year 1815, nor indeed since, paid any attention to this verse, as describing in regular chronological order the several parts of which the Apocalypse consists. Though they have then failed, as is universally acknowledged, in giving a satisfactory interpretation of the book, I affirm that, humanly speaking, it is solely because they have not sought it according to the clear and simple directions of the text.

Verse 20. In the concluding verse of this chapter, our Lord explains more directly what was designated by the things which the Apostle had seen: namely, the preceding manifestation of himself as walking amidst the seven golden candlesticks, and holding the seven stars in his right hand. And he directs his attention particularly to "*the mystery*" or hidden signification implied under these visible symbols; namely, the watchful care which he exercises over his churches, and his power to support and save their ministers, who were naturally more exposed than others to the fury of their pagan adversaries; because such revelation was peculiarly adapted to their present circumstances, as tending to encourage and support them under their trials. Thus does every passage which we have yet considered speak the love and condescension of Christ in a manner calculated to enforce the exhortation of the Apostle, "Rejoice in the Lord alway and again I say, Rejoice." And if the sense of such surpassing glory and of our own exceeding sinfulness and unworthiness should dispose us to adopt the language of Peter—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" let us reflect, that the glories of

Christ are manifested by contrast. It is the exceeding height of his glory, condescending to the depth of our humiliation; his infinite holiness contrasted with our depravity; his love, with our ingratitude; his willingness to draw near to us, with our unwillingness to come to him; which alone can display, in any adequate measure, the infinite attributes and perfections of God. Let us then draw near unto him in full assurance of faith, and hear him addressing us also, saying, "Fear not." Or if we hesitate to apply to our-

selves words spoken to an inspired Apostle by Christ manifested in his glory, let us consider, that they were also addressed to his *Church* at an earlier period, when he said, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and were again spoken by an angelic messenger to a company of women—"Fear not, I know whom ye seek." Let our conscience only bear us witness, that in all things, but more especially in examining this blessed volume, we seek the Lord Jesus.

JAS. H. FREER.

SATAN BECOME AN ANGEL OF LIGHT; OR DEVICES OF THE LAST DAYS.

No. I.

St. Paul intimates to the Corinthians, that he had made it part of his business "not to be ignorant of the devices of Satan;"^a and warns them to be watchful, in a case wherein they were liable to be deceived by him, "lest Satan should get an advantage over them." Their danger was not of an ordinary character; for the wily adversary does not usually tempt the righteous by those means which he employs to entice worldly and ungodly persons; well knowing that they are no longer calculated to succeed with the former. His object is, to entangle and ensnare them with the specious appearance of what is good; as in the instance alluded to, the Corinthians were, on the one hand, in danger of falling into the devices of Satan, by "bearing them which were evil"^b through a false notion of charity; and in danger, on the other hand, of being urged by him, when they

did reprove the evil, of erring through excess of discipline.^c

This warning of the Spirit, by the apostle is of increasing importance in the present day; for at the time of the end the devil not only comes down from heaven having great *wrath*, because he "knoweth that he hath but a short time;"^f but he falls from heaven especially as *Lucifer* or the *light-bearer*, the *son of the morning*;^g which seems to intimate that he likewise comes with more than usual *subtlety*, and "with all *deceivableness* of unrighteousness."^h For now is Satan himself eminently "transformed into an angel of light;"ⁱ and "his ministers also are transformed as the ministers of righteousness:"^k for the *deceivableness* of unrighteousness apparently consists in putting on the semblance of righteousness itself, and clothing itself with a glare of spurious light so dazzling, as to de-

^a 2 Cor. II. 11. ^b Rev. II. 2. ^c Compare 1 Cor. v. 3—6, 13. ^f Rev. XII. 12.
^g Isaiah XIV. 12. ^h 2 Thess. II. 10. ⁱ 2 Cor. XI. 14. ^k Ibid. v. 15.

ceive if it were possible the very elect;—and *really* deceiving and blinding the minds of numbers, who, after all, have only “a name to live.” Ah! little does the world suspect, that much of what they call charity, and liberality, and mercy, is really the deceivableness of *unrighteousness*; that the boasted love of liberty, of equality, of knowledge, and the zeal for reform, so often on the tongues of men, is, in the great majority of instances, nothing more than the strong delusion of those, who “while they promise liberty, are themselves the servants of corruption.”¹

Persuaded then of the importance of great jealousy and watchfulness against the artifices and subtlety of Satan, I purpose in the course of two or three papers to point out what appear to me to be some of the devices which he is so specially practising in these last times; and in regard to the consequences of which, the minds of many do not appear sufficiently impressed.

The first I shall notice is connected with *the liberty of the Press*;—which is entirely a question of modern times, having arisen out of the invention of printing, to which it is necessarily subsequent in date.

Perhaps nothing exercises a more constant and powerful influence upon the moral condition of society, than *expressed opinions*. Viewed abstractedly, opinions may appear to be harmless and unimportant; but when we come to look at the practical working of human nature, and to trace back actions to their original source, we shall find that they are intimately connected with certain first principles and notions from which they generally flow. It is true, that numerous evil actions appear to arise more from the *absence* of certain principles, than from the distinct presence of opinions of an

opposite character; as where mankind are found existing in a barbarous, untutored, and unevangelized condition: but even in those cases where they seem to be guided only by brute sense, it is “still the wisdom of the flesh” by which they are moved; which wisdom is in most instances more or less varied in its aspect and effects by superadded notions derived from some existing superstition. From the early period at which our notions are imbibed, many are unconscious of the principles which move them; for they have, in most instances, imperceptibly impressed the mind; to say nothing of the fact, that the great majority of mankind live without any observation of what passes daily in their minds, and are still less accustomed to make inquiry into remote causes of action. When indeed some *new* opinion is first presented to their notice, they cannot help but observe it; because it probably comes into collision with some other notion previously entertained. And it is at such times that the actual power of opinions is made manifest; since those new opinions will either for the moment stir up their minds to resist them, under the impression that they are barren or pernicious; or, if they fall in with their views, they will, in some respect or other, exercise an influence upon the conduct, by giving an increased or a diminished impetus to their energies, as the case may be.

But the most remarkable circumstance connected with the influence of opinion, is the way in which the frequent and allowed expression of sentiments affect the mind, even when those sentiments are at first revolting to the mind. Sometimes men reject an opinion merely because it is the sentiment of some solitary individual, or of a

¹ 2 Pet. ii, 19.

few only ;—it appears to them singular, extravagant, impracticable :—but every fresh adherent brings another and another, which keep multiplying in geometrical progression, until the increase of numbers who advocate the opinion, and the more frequent repetition of the opinion itself, causes it at last to arrest attention, and then perhaps to be received with that measure of deference which renders it influential to a certain extent. For if an opinion does not win us over to its advocacy, or lead us to embrace it so far as to *act* upon it ; yet will it often *neutralize* our opposition to it, and also our course of conduct as influenced by some *other* opinion ; and in this respect it effectually makes its way, and proves itself to be operative to that degree.

The influence of an opinion frequently reiterated and allowed is further witnessed in cases where persons are not affected by any increase of the numbers who advocate it ; for the mere circumstance of the mind becoming *familiarized* to an opinion which it abhors, has a tendency in the course of time to blunt the acuteness of those sensibilities which were provoked against it, till at length it is listened to patiently, next with indifference, after that with complacency, and finally it lays hold of and contaminates the mind. What the poet says in regard to vice is here often strikingly exemplified :—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien ;
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.*

There are two remarks however

which I must make by way of qualification of this statement. First, that though all actions may be traced up to the influence of opinions, all opinions are not equally operative ; nor do they influence all persons in like manner. For some, being fortified by opposing principles, perhaps at once resist them ; and hence the conflict which takes place continually between light and darkness. Secondly, there must be taken into account the aptitude of human nature to be influenced by principles of evil, rather than principles of good : for the former fall in more readily with the corrupt bias of the heart ; and in the unregenerate, the hold which principles of light have taken upon the heart is but feeble, and offers but a faint resistance to the powers of darkness when they are permitted to assail it.

It is then, I apprehend, upon the principles here contended for that the Scriptures proceed, when they warn the Israelites, in the first place to be circumspect, and make no mention of other gods, neither let it be heard out of their mouths ;^m and when they further direct them, if an own brother, son, daughter, wife or friend, should entice them secretly, *saying*—“ Let us go and serve other Gods, &c” not to consent or *hearken* to him ; neither to pity, spare or conceal him, but surely to kill him.ⁿ The broaching of such a sentiment was considered a sufficient overt act, and to have a necessary tendency, if borne with, to lead on to the deed itself ; and the very mention of the names of other gods in ordinary discourse was

* I have known several instances of individuals who from the mere circumstance of constantly reading a *newspaper*, the sentiments of which they have at first disapproved, have nevertheless imperceptibly fallen into a habit of thinking and speaking in the same strain, till at last they have become decidedly imbued with them, almost without being conscious of the change that has taken place in them. I mention this only by way of illustration.

^m Exod. xxiii. 13 ; Josh. xxiii. 7. ⁿ Deut. xiii. 6—11.

viewed, as calculated to familiarize the mind with the evil of idolatry, and to deaden that abhorrence of it which ought continually to exist. So the righteous are afterwards exhorted, "to cease to *hear* the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge;"^o and under the New Testament they are exhorted, that if any preach any other Gospel than that which the Apostle had delivered, to let him be accursed.^p

Much might be said here, were it not irrelevant to my present object, upon the evil of persons, who know the truth as it is in Jesus, habitually listening, nevertheless, to that instruction which is contrary to the "words of knowledge." But I must turn rather to the subject which I purposed to treat of in the outset, and ask—how far that *freedom of opinion*, which the world now so loudly clamours for, is consistent with the principles here stated? and whether the *unrestricted* liberty of the press, which is considered one of the great bulwarks of civil and religious liberty, be not rather a mighty engine of Satan, whereby he is effectually enticing men away from that service of God which alone is perfect freedom? I do not hesitate myself to pronounce it an *EVIL*. The very circumstance, that the carnal man, and the men in particular who are least under the influence of godliness, should be so eager for it, ought to be sufficient to lead him that is spiritual to suspect it: for why should the god of this world excite his servants (which these are) to contend for a principle, unless that principle be the offspring of the wisdom which is from beneath? He is crafty enough to know well the importance to his kingdom of letting all the conceptions of men's

evil hearts have full vent and a free course given to them; for he not only is aware that, in the vast majority of instances, the evil treasure of the heart will produce evil things; (for "how can they that are evil speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;"^q) but that they are actually the spirits of demons themselves, which in numerous instances speak by the mouths of men;^r for indeed "the whole world lieth in the *wicked one*;" (*ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*. 1 John v, 19.)

I am aware of the objection which may be readily brought forward, that restrictions upon the liberty of the press or upon the freedom of utterance are liable to abuse; and that good and sound doctrine might be and has been suppressed, under erroneous apprehensions of its character and tendency. The answer to this is equally ready.—If to tolerate this evil be contrary to the word of God, it is then our bounden duty to walk by the spirit of that word, and leave the consequences to Him. To take for example the duty of a governor; it is the same as that of the father of a family, only on a larger scale: and if it be the duty of the father of a family "to command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord,"^s it is the duty of the monarch, or of the state which acts for Him, to do the same. Most men agree that *power* must be lodged in the state; but is not power, exercised in the restraining and punishing *other* offences, equally liable to abuse? How comes it then, that the power should not be extended to suppress the publication of opinions having a direct tendency to lead men into apostacy from God, and into the commission of all evil offences against each other? Men will

^o Prov. xix. 27. ^p Gal. i. 8, 9. ^q Matt. xii. 34, 35. ^r Ephes. ii. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2; Rev. xvi. 13, 14. ^s Gen. xviii. 19.

allow that the parent of the state should punish theft, murder, adultery &c. how comes it that they should not see the importance of checking the promulgation of those sentiments and opinions that necessarily lead to these offences? It is because "the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."^t How unwise and infatuated would that man be thought, who having a tree in his garden producing fruit, which he was aware would prove deleterious and destructive to his children if picked up and eaten, should content himself with having the fruit picked up as it fell from its boughs and cast away, instead of having the tree that produced it cut down: yet thus it is when men punish the fruit of opinions, and allow the opinions themselves to flourish and take root undisturbed. It is like attempting to kill the viper, yet suffering men to hatch the cockatrice egg, which "breaketh out into a viper."^u Ah! "he that eateth of their eggs dieth,"^v saith the Lord:—the very principles are pernicious and deadly to the soul!

The delusion however with which Satan has continued to bewilder men in regard to the *press* is singular from its great absurdity. He seems to have succeeded in investing it with a degree of obscurity, and at the same time to have cast a certain halo around it, which has caused many to regard it as a sort of divinity, (which if they do not actually worship they defer to,) unable to perceive, that it is after all nothing more than the words and conceptions of mere men, and that words *printed* have in reality no greater majesty than words *spoken*, and should be dealt with in precisely the same manner. Yet there are numerous instances in which things are tol-

erated in print, which would not be endured for a moment if uttered by the lips. Many, for example, would not suffer an individual to have access to their families, if they conceived that his conversation would be infidel, or calculated to vitiate the sense of moral purity and propriety; who nevertheless will suffer newspapers, novels, poetry and other printed works to find entrance, in which they know passages having a tendency to weaken the bonds of religion and virtue continually creep in, and often appear in naked and undisguised language. It is quite deplorable also to notice, how the love of "filthy lucre" deadens the sensibilities of the mind and blinds the heart in this respect. Many persons engaged in trade would at once see the impropriety of *uttering* infidel language, or of giving countenance to or repeating those *conversational* opinions of others, which they conceive prejudicial to religion, morals, or good government.—And let it be proposed to *pay* them for so doing, and to make a gain by retailing blasphemy or sedition *orally*, and I verily believe that the majority of the class to which I now allude, would shrink with horror from the suggestion, and view such a step as leading them into the depths of baseness and apostasy. Yet, marvelous to say! *print* this same language in a book, and convert it thus by means of the *press* into an article of merchandize, and many of them can give it circulation and make a gain from it without any scruple,—not seeing that the moral turpitude of the action is just the same; but acting as if there were some deity in the *press*, or some deity in *trade*, who has power to release his votaries, when engaged in *his* service, from all responsibility to the Lord Jehovah.

^t 2 Cor. iv. 4. ^u Isa. lix. 5. ^v Ibid.

There are some other circumstances equally glaring. It is a favourite maxim now with many, that, admitting the evil tendency and abominable character of many published opinions of the day, you give increased publicity to them by prosecuting them; and do likewise excite a more prurient desire in the minds of many to read them, by forcibly withdrawing them from observation. One would have supposed that with the example before men's eyes of the horrible state of morals in a neighbouring country, and of the evil fruits there of a revolution brought about chiefly by the unbridled license given to the publication of infidel sentiments;—one would have supposed, I say, that men would have been struck by the great practical negation thus presented to their theories. But I would urge another consideration. Where would the advocates of the unbridled licentiousness of the press draw the line and set the limit?—If it be wrong to forbid the utterance of blasphemy by the infidel against the Lord Jesus Christ,* it is also wrong to forbid a treatise recommending absolute *idolatry* to the nation. No man can give a satisfactory reason, on the principle which I now contend against, why an idolater, or a man favourable to idolatry, should not endeavour by means of the press “to entice men to go and serve other gods.” If the press must be left at liberty in *other* matters, it must be left at liberty

in this matter also: unless indeed the principle of a *restricted* liberty be admitted; and then the very thing is admitted which I would advocate: only that I would insist, it is as much the duty of the censor to prevent *blasphemy* and *infidelity* from uttering its voice, by means of the press, as it is to prevent *idolatry* from so doing.

It is not however my province or my object to prescribe the remedy or to point out the restrictions; nor should I ever be likely to be listened to by those in power if I did. My object has been to expose one of the devices of Satan, and to warn the christian reader against him; so that the believer may take heed “that he be not led away with the error of the wicked.” For there are many professors of religion whom I have heard in public utter things, in regard to the freedom of opinions, and the impropriety of any restrictions upon *knowledge*, which I deem very calculated to help on this delusion: and many things have I likewise met with of the same character in books, published by men affecting serious religion, which however it were invidious to quote. Our duty is rather to oppose the *principle*, wherever we have lawful opportunity of so doing; and to strip off the vizard from the assumed angel of light.

In my next I hope to draw attention to another device connected with this matter.

BETA.

* Under the Mosaic Law the blasphemer of the Lord was commanded to be put to death. Lev. xxiv. 16. I am very far from intending to recommend the punishment of death in cases of blasphemy, &c. under a Gospel dispensation. That would be as much in the extreme one way, as the *toleration* of the evil is in the other. But it appears quite a duty, first to endeavour to suppress the nuisance and prevent the injury; and secondly, if possible, to correct the offender. I think it is Dean Swift who somewhere states, in illustration of this subject, that as a man may be permitted to have poisonous drugs, so long as he keeps them for experiment only in his closet, but must be dealt with as a dangerous member of society when he begins to dispense them indiscriminately to the public; so men may enjoy their pestiferous opinions, whilst they can keep them to themselves, but they should not be allowed to sport with those opinions in public, and thus to endanger the welfare of mankind.

Reviews and Notices of Books.

(1) *The Name and Number of the Beast*; by the REV. REGINALD RABETT, A. M. of Queen's College Cambridge, and Vicar of Thornton, Leicestershire.

Lond. Seeley & Co. 8vo. pp. lvi and 306.

There has perhaps been nothing which has more tended to discourage christians from pursuing the study and investigation of prophecy, than the conflicting interpretations of various parts of it, which have from time to time been published to the world; and among those portions of prophecy which have chiefly suffered in this respect, we shall perhaps not be far wrong if we instance the *two witnesses* of Rev. xi and the *name and number of the beast* of Rev. xiii. Such a multiplicity of solutions of the latter enigma have been offered, and so greatly have some of them differed from each other, and the number 666 has consequently appeared to possess such a peculiar facility of adapting itself to almost any name, person, church or sect, by a little twisting and adjustment of letters, that whilst profane persons have altogether laughed at the matter, even men of piety have settled down in the conclusion, that there can be no certainty attach itself to *any* interpretation; that whatsoever degree of plausibility may seem to belong to some one of the solutions offered, it is effectually neutralized by the equal plausibility of those of a contrary character. Now, whatever may be the difference of opinion in this matter, there is one evil which we would most earnestly warn our christian friends against: viz. not to suffer themselves

to fall into an apathetic frame of mind in regard to it; as if, amid the distracting theories and expositions offered upon parts of prophecy, it were in vain to seek an explication of them, and that the duty of the believer were to sit a passive spectator only, waiting until it should please the Lord to cast some extraordinary light upon it. "*Here is wisdom*—Let him that hath understanding COUNT the number of the Beast, &c." This is the word of the Lord respecting it; and it appears to us that when he excites his people in such terms as these to investigate a particular mystery, it betrays a want of spiritual understanding and wisdom for any to treat the subject with neglect.

Turning then to the publication of Mr. Rabett, we cannot but regard its appearance as both seasonable and useful. He does not indeed profess to have made any new and dazzling discovery: he merely takes up an old and almost exploded hypothesis of the eminent Irenæus, and having laid down the principles upon which the inquiry should be conducted, he applies those principles to vindicate the suggestion of this ancient Father, and to exhibit the fallacy of those numerous subsequent theories, which have well nigh overwhelmed it. Without therefore meaning to assert, that what Irenæus so long before the event advanced as a mere guess, has been actually proved by the event and demonstrated by Mr. Rabett to be the real solution; yet do we conceive that it is no mean service rendered to the cause of prophetic interpretation thus to narrow as he

has done the grounds of inquiry, on any one topic whatsoever, and by this means to free it in a great measure from perplexity.

It will be known to many of our readers, that Irenæus, one of the early Greek fathers,* mentions in his work on heresies, (lib. v. cap. xxx,) three different words from among many which were advanced by others; each of which words made (according to the Greek method of computing them by the numerical value of the letters thereof,) the number 666. They are *Ευαρθας*, *Λατεινος* and *Τειραν*. The former Irenæus dismisses as scarcely worthy of notice: the two last he regards with some complacency. On account of certain peculiarities in the word itself, he seems to incline most to *Τειραν*; but *Λατεινος* is, he says, very likely to be the true one, "because they were Latins who reigned in his time." In his ready application of it to the Roman empire, he seems to consider it as understood generally, that that was the *kingdom* symbolized by the beast of the Apocalypse; though he seems rather to deprecate such an application, and even the inquiry itself, until the kingdom should first be broken up and divided into ten parts.†

It is the name *Λατεινος* then, which Mr. Rabett advocates, and lays down in the course of his disquisition certain principles, derived from the text of Scripture, which he considers must necessarily meet in

any word, pretending to be the true solution, and which do concur in the instance before us.

1st. It must be the name of a MAN: for the *name* and the *number* are evidently used interchangeably in the text: "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the *name* of the beast, or the *number of his name*. Here is wisdom: let him that hath understanding count the *number* of the beast, for it is the *number* of a man, &c." i.e. —the name is the proper name of a man, and the number therefore answers to the *number* of a man, or a man's proper name. This Mr. Rabett shews to be the case in the instance before us, since *Latinus* was king of Latium or Italy, and founder of the ancient kingdom of the Latins, called after his name *Latium*, and afterwards *Rome*, whence came the Latin name, race and language.

2dly. He contends that this name should be written and calculated in *Greek*. One reason assigned by our author is, the fact, that all the three instances adduced by Irenæus are Greek; but this is not conclusive with us. For Irenæus, being himself a Greek, would naturally, if he were not guided by any fixed principle, write in his own language. It shews indeed what was the prevailing notion in the church on this head; but even this not conclusively, unless we had names instanced by theological writers of other nations also written in Greek. Mr. Rabett

* He was Bishop of Lyons about A.D. 171. He speaks of Polycarp as having been a hearer of St. John, and himself as a hearer of Polycarp; and as having received from that father many of the sayings of St. John himself.

† The manner in which Irenæus passes from the consideration of *λατεινος*, after having approved it to a certain extent, is very singular, and looks as if he had been influenced by the prudential consideration, not needlessly to provoke the wrath of the powers that be upon a subject that was involved in so much obscurity. For after his "*valde verisimile est, quoniam novissimum Regnum hoc habet vocabulum: Latini enim sunt qui nunc regnant:*" he abruptly adds—*sed non in hoc nos gloriabimur*. And then he passes on to the word *Τειραν* and approves it, because it has *six* letters only, and each syllable three letters; and because none of their kings had borne the name of *Teitan*, and for various other equally unsatisfactory reasons.

seems to think the circumstance, that Irenæus was one of the Greek fathers, is in *favor* of his hypothesis : we deem the contrary to be the case ; —we should attach more weight to his authority on this point, had he been a Roman, and whilst writing in *Latin*, had nevertheless brought forward these three names in *Greek*. That which would decide us in this matter is the fact, that the Apocalypse was itself originally written in Greek, and that the Greek has ever been the standard of reference (so far as the New Testament is concerned) among critics, throughout the Christian Church. Moreover the farther circumstance adduced by Mr. R. that in this instance the number is by St. John not written in full length, (as is usual with other numbers,) but in Greek numeral letters, thus— $\chi\zeta\epsilon'$, points out the Greek most explicitly, as the language by the numeral characters of which it is to be calculated.* And if it is to be counted in Greek numeral letters, it must bespelt in Greek letters, for it would be contradictory and absurd to write the name in Greek and calculate by Roman numerals, or to write it in Latin and calculate it by Greek numerals : for neither indeed would there be letters and numerals to correspond in some instances. The word *Lateinos* is claimed by Mr. Rabett to be of Greek orthography (though this is by some disputed, as will presently be seen :) and it is evident to those acquainted with the subject, that Irenæus calculates this, as also the two other examples, in Greek numerals.—

$\Lambda \cdot \alpha \cdot \tau \cdot \epsilon \cdot \iota \cdot \nu \cdot \omicron \cdot \varsigma$
30, 1, 300, 5, 10, 50, 70, 200.

We must return however to the *orthography*, for that is disputed ;

and it appears to us to be the only question of any moment, so far as *this* name is concerned. The papists, having been pressed by it as a proof that the Latin Church is the apostasy described in the Apocalypse, Bellarmine objected that it was incorrect to write it *Lateinos*, with the diphthong *ei*, and that it ought rather to be written *Latinos*.† Dr. Adam Clarke has recently advocated the same side of the question, for the purpose of establishing his own theory in its place ; and has brought forward the authority of Hesiod, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Plutarch, Dio Cassius, Photius, and the Byzantine Historians. But Mr. Rabett contends that the question is, not whether the persons here set in array by Dr. Clarke used the *ei* ; but whether it was acknowledged as a *legitimate* mode of writing the circumflexed *i* among the ancient Greeks or Romans in the names of men ;—whether in fact it was genuine orthography in the time of Irenæus. We would illustrate this view of the question by a parallel case in our own times. The verb to *wave*, when signifying to *put off* or *defer*, is often found used by modern authors of good style and correct orthography written as above, with the diphthong *ai* ; and it is likewise found in many modern writers spelt *wave*. Now the latter authorities, if produced against the former mode of writing it at a thousand years distance, would be no proof that it was not also a received mode of writing it in the present day : and the same argument would apply to many other words which are variously written, and that by accomplished scholars.

To meet this question then Mr.

* The number 666 does itself occur twice in the Septuagint, (Ezra II. 13 and 1 Kings x. 14,) and is written both times at full length, $\epsilon\chi\alpha\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota\alpha \epsilon\eta\eta\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha \epsilon\zeta$.

† *Latinus* is out of the question in this argument, as that would be writing it with a Latin termination instead of a Greek.

Rabett first adduces arguments of a presumptive character: viz. that Irenæus should, in two examples out of three, give instances of this orthography (as *Lateinos* for *Latinos*, *Teitan* for *Titan*,) and yet give no note or intimation whatsoever that he is deviating from the ordinary usage; which is hardly to be accounted for, if he considered that his orthography was liable to be challenged. Candour however obliges us to avow, that there is something like a remote intimation in Irenæus, in regard to the word *τειταν* that it was more commonly spelt *Titan*; for when he first instances it, he says—"Sed et *ΤΕΙΤΑΝ*, *prima syllaba per duas Græcas vocales, ε et ι, scripta*, omnium nominum quæ apud nos inveniuntur, magis fide dignum est." At the same time, he gives no such notice in regard to *LATEINOS*, and as he propounds both names with modesty, and not at all with the air and dogmatical spirit of one who is anxious to establish a favourite hypothesis, it is but fair to admit, that it was a mode of orthography which was in common use, and which he had no reason to expect would be objected to.

Of direct proof of the legitimate use of this orthography Mr. Rabett brings forward Ennius, lib. vi. 26, (who had previously been quoted in the matter by Dr. H. More and Bp. Newton,) who uses the identical word *Lateinos*. This is the only instance in the use of the word itself, unless we except Irenæus, alleged by Scaliger;* whom Mr. Rabett quotes as stating, that the Greeks write the letter *iota* with the diphthong *ει* when they pronounce it before an *ν*, as *Αντωνεινος*, *Σαβει-*

νος, and *Λαρεινος* in Irenæus. "That which custom therefore hath established (continues Scaliger,) not only is it no fault to write it so, but it would appear *necessary to make it so.*"^a

But of evidence to the use of the diphthong *ει* in place of the *ι* Mr. Rabett adduces an overwhelming mass; not only proving the propriety of its use before the letter *ν*, as mentioned by Scaliger, but before other letters also, of which we have already had an instance in the word *τειταν*. He instances Eusebius likewise spelling the name of Irenæus, *Επειναιος*. He gives various examples from Varro, Plautus, and Lucilius; and quotes Scapula declaring the practice to have been common in the time of Cicero. He cites also Hubert Goltzius, who in his *The-saurus rei Antiquariæ* has numerous instances of Greek inscriptions from the medals of the Roman emperors and their wives, among which may be instanced, by way of example, *Σαβεινα*, *Αλβεινος*, *Κωνσ-αντεινος*, (the *C* being used in all instances instead of the *Σ*;) and he quotes his author as explaining, at page 284 of his work, "that *ει* (in these inscriptions) is put for *ι*, as *eidus* for *idus* *leibertas* for *libertas*, and many others." And finally the Sieur A. de la Motraye, in his *Voyage to the Chersonesus and Adrianople*, has also instanced on the medals of Antoninus and Faustina, the use of the *ει* for *ι*.^b This is surely evidence sufficient to satisfy any dispassionate inquirer of the legitimacy, (not to say with Scaliger, the *necessity*) of writing *Λαρεινος*, in the manner given by Irenæus.

3rdly. Mr. Rabett lays it down

* The word *Latineis* used instead of *Latinis*, of which examples are given by Mr. Rabett, we do not consider proofs of the use of the actual word *Lateinos*; because it is evident that in the nominative singular the same would be *Latinos* or *Latinus*.

^a Scaliger Animad. ad Chron. Euseb. 106.

^b Tome i. chap. xx, p. 425;—Tome ii. chap. v. p. 157.

as a principle, that the number must be 666 and no other. This, if we consult our authorized version, appears to require no comment. But there exists a solitary instance to the contrary, in the Codices of Petavius, a French Jesuit, which was adduced by Archbishop Laud, and is revived in the present day by Professor Lee, among some other obsolete monstrosities brought forward again by that learned writer.—The manuscript alluded to has χιϛ', or 616. The thing does not appear to us worthy of any serious notice. There is scarcely a passage of Scripture existing, of which a various reading may not be found in some manuscript or other, through the carelessness, fraud or ignorance of transcribers; but if a generally received reading is to be questioned, because some solitary instance of a different one, and that of comparatively late date, can be raked up, we must bid farewell to the idea of ever having any truth of Scripture established on a certain basis. All the best and earliest Greek Testament manuscripts have it χξϛ'.

4th. We would beg to add, that in our opinion the name of the beast should not only answer to the number of a *man*, but also to the number of a *kingdom*: for it is the number of the *beast* likewise; and the beast is evidently, from his numerous horns and crowns a kingdom or empire. It is the same apparently as the beast of Dan. vii, and that is explained to signify a kingdom.

It is needless to add, that in both the two last particulars the name *Λατρινος* corresponds with what is required.—And as the word itself answers to the terms or principles laid down; so Mr. Rabett justly observes, that the papal kingdom has proved itself to be signally *Latin*. The popes and their coadjutors have adopted the epithet *Roman* as the

distinguishing name of their church and empire; they have canonized the *Latin* language at the Council of Trent for the use of the whole church, in lieu of the Italian, which is the vernacular tongue of Italy;—they allow no exercise of religion but in *Latin*; and the pope still considers himself as the head of the *Latins*.

Leaving now this particular name with the reader, for his own consideration, we pass on to notice some few of the other names that have appeared, and to shew how they are affected by the application of the principles here adduced.

Almost all, then, that have been advanced fail in some one or more of the particulars that have been here assigned. For example, such names as *Αποστατης*, suggested by Mr. Faber, and *η Λατινη βασιλεια*, by Dr. Clarke, do not contain the proper name of a man. Such words as *LVDOVICVS* and *NAPOLEON* are names of men, but they are neither written in Greek, nor calculated in Greek numerals, nor are they names of kingdoms. The square root suggested by Mr. Potter, and so much lauded by Mede, (viz. 25.) is objectionable on every account; for it does not answer to the number of the name, nor to any one requisite of the Scriptures; nor is it strictly the root of 666, leaving as it does a residue of 41: the number 26 would have been nearer as a root than 25. And once more, the word *Μαομερις* has not a Greek termination, and is in other respects incorrectly spelt, as has been amply shewn by Mr. Faber.

The word *αποστατης* however, advanced by the latter writer, and recently contended for by him in a separate treatise called "Recapitulated Apostasy," is worthy of further observation, on account of the name of Mr. Faber having influenced others to adopt it, and because it is like-

wise adopted by Papists and applied by them to Protestants. And in addition to the exception just taken against it, the very circumstance that it is a word frequently applied to deserters from *any* communion, deprives it at once of that clear and explicit character, which one would expect to find in a mark that is to distinguish the kingdom of the beast from all others. The word *Λατρινος* is certainly free from this vagueness; as it cannot apply to any but those who are members of the Latin church.

Mr. Rabett however brings an objection against the word which appears to us entirely destructive of its pretensions:—viz. that when it is correctly written, its number is not 666. To make it this number Mr. Faber does not write it with the letters *στ* but with the contraction *ς*. This latter character Mr. R. contends is not a numeral, but nothing more than a ligature or contraction: that to make it a numeral there must at least be the mark over it, thus *ς̄*, in which form it is incapable of expansion into the letters *στ*. This does not strike us as a valid argument; because all the letters of the Greek alphabet, when used as numerals, have a mark over them or under them; and it may as well therefore be objected to the first letter in the word, *α*, that it should be written *ᾱ*. We attach more weight to his assertion, that the episemon *ς̄* is not a contraction of *στ*, but is derived from the double *ΓΓ* or *Ϝ* written *ς*; and that it has no other power but the denotation of quantity, any more than two other characters used as numerals, viz. *κοππα* and *σασπι*. These are never met with other than as numerals and in calculations; and Mr. Rabett therefore argues, that had it been customary for the Greeks to make use of an episemon as a *letter*, we should meet with examples of the other two in words; and if, on the other hand,

it were usual to make use of any of the numerous stenographical contractions of the letters of the Greek alphabet for *numerals*, we should meet with other instances besides that of *ς*.

Mr Faber is therefore in a complicated dilemma. If he writes it *στ* he makes the number 1160. If he uses the contraction without the mark, it is after all no other than *στ*: unless Mr. F. would maintain that *ς* is at the same time equal to *στ* and *not* equal to it. If he puts the mark over it, he makes it an episemon, and not a letter; which would be as absurd as to use in English the cypher 0, for the letter o, or the figure 1, for the letter I, merely because there is a resemblance between them. And farther, if the mark be omitted, and left to the reader to supply, he might chuse to place it beneath instead of above, when instead of 6 it would signify 6000.

Such is the substance of Mr Rabett's Treatise: and we repeat, that he has rendered service by his work, if it only tends to free the subject in any measure from obscurity, and to shew, that it is not every plausible conceit, which a writer may choose to bring forward, that has really a pretension to be considered.

(2.) *The time of the End.—A charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Ely, at a Visitation held in the Parish Church of St. Michael's, Cambridge, May 19, 1835, by the REV. J. H. BROWNE, M. A. Archdeacon of Ely.*

London: Hatchards, 8vo. pp. 114.

We have always felt persuaded in our own minds, that if we were really approaching to that great and awful crisis foretold in Scripture as immediately to precede the coming of the Lord, the signs of that crisis given in the word of God would thicken around us, and become more distinct as the "day of clouds" drew

on ; and that as they darkened the moral and political atmosphere, many would be roused by the aspect of the times to consider the subject of prophecy, who were previously unmindful of it ; and that others, who, though not disregarding of it, did not bring it prominently forward, would then be moved to sound the alarm in God's holy mountain, and to call the attention of their people to "the light that shineth in a dark place." And this is remarkably the character of the present day. A few years since great attention was awakened by the cry—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh;" but Satan contrived, both by urging to extravagant opinions, and to unseemly dogmatism in propounding true ones, to cast a measure of odium on the study of prophecy, and more especially upon the hope of the premillennial advent of the Lord, which odium has stumbled many and tended greatly to retard the progress of investigation, and the consequent diffusion of prophetic light. The signs however have continued to increase;—that which was but as a mist spread upon the mountains has thickened into gloominess ; (Joel II. 2.) and one and another of steadfast sober minded men have arisen and trimmed their lamps, and numerous instances have recently come to our knowledge of persons who were indifferent or prejudiced, who now at least acknowledge the propriety of *studying* prophecy.

The interest then of the publication which heads this article does not arise so much from any thing *new* in the way of prophetic interpretation which it contains; as from the circumstance of its being the production of a dignified minister of the Church of England, who has been distinguished among all who have known him for simple piety, modesty and sobriety of deportment; and who is yet moved to come forward, at a period when prophecy is

still labouring under a reproach, and not only to direct the attention of the clergy assembled at the annual visitation at Cambridge, to the importance of the subject at the present crisis ; but also boldly to state views in regard to the sense and bearing of prophecy in general, which are inseparably identified in the minds of some with the notion of danger and delusion. It is encouraging however to perceive that in the present instance the charge of the Archdeacon is "*published at the request of the Clergy*;"—a fact from which we may infer that it produced a serious impression upon their minds.

But if the Archdeacon gives us nothing additional in the way of interpretation, he treats his subject with ability, and brings it before his hearers in a striking and forcible manner. He begins by noticing the fact, that many serious students of the word of God have had their minds directed to the prophetic parts of it, and are endeavouring to ascertain, under what prophetic era we are living ; and he contends that if such inquiries be conducted in a spirit of humility, prayer and moderation, "they must tend to raise our thoughts above the turmoils of earthly strife, to calm the agitation of our minds in the prospect of impending danger, and to cheer and invigorate us in the path of duty." He then brings forward certain texts to shew, that it is the decided *duty* of the Christian to enter upon this investigation; one of which texts he illustrates so ably that we must give it in his own words.—

"In strict accordance with these views are the words of St. Peter—*We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.* It is evident that the Apostle is here speaking chiefly, if not exclusively, of unfulfilled prophecies. Those predictions which had received their accomplishment could with no propriety be compared to a light shin-

ing in a dark place. Whereas, on the other hand, the dim and indistinct perceptions which they impart to us concerning time, locality, and circumstance, in connexion with those *future* events, which are the objects of prophetic vision, render the similitude peculiarly appropriate. The great outlines may be traced with much distinctness, while the collateral and subordinate incidents are enveloped in obscurity, till the time when their completeness shall have drawn aside the veil. The force and exactness of the comparison will, perhaps, be best appreciated by those, who, with the aid of a few glimmering tapers have endeavoured to explore a lofty and spacious subterranean cavern. They may be enabled to discern some of its more prominent features, while the configurations of the smaller projections are entirely concealed from their view." P. 5.

He next proceeds to avow, that he is "strongly impressed with the conviction, that a sufficient number of tokens and indications may be found concentrated in the present eventful era to leave little room for doubt, in the mind of any judicious and impartial inquirer," that our lot has fallen under that period emphatically designated in Dan. xii. as *THE TIME OF THE END*. He adduces verse 4, that at the time of the end "many should run to and fro and *knowledge* should be increased," which he conceives is remarkably accomplished, whether it referred to the increased understanding of the prophetic writings, or to the assiduity with which secular learning should be cultivated. He also instances 2 Tim. iii. 1, in which Paul describes the character of the *apostates* of the last days; first shewing that though, from the constitution of our nature, present occurrences make so vivid an impression on the mind, as naturally to lead us to overrate immediate danger; "yet, when a strong feeling of alarm with regard to the future pervades the thoughtful, intelligent and best informed classes of society;—when, even amongst many worldly men, lively apprehensions are entertained

of political convulsions;—whilst amongst a large body of real christians a period of trouble is anticipated as introductory to the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom; when, in short—*men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth*, we can scarcely doubt that these are the perilous times predicted by St. Paul, and that the fabric of civil society must be endangered when the characters whom he has enumerated increase and abound." (p. 10.) Having slightly pointed to the existence of those evil characteristics, described by the Apostle in men "having the *form of godliness*," he next instances Rev. xiv. 6, 7, in which St. John sees an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to every nation and kindred, &c. and saying, Fear God and give glory to him, *for the hour of his judgement is come*. This angel we take it sets forth a mighty *missionary* agency, which is to be raised up immediately prior to the judgement of God upon Babylon (for that is the judgement which the context evidently points to;) and which agency, when it shall be seen, is to be interpreted by the church of God as loudly declaring, "that the hour of His judgement is come," and therefore will be immediately followed by a signal exhibition of divine wrath. The existence of this missionary agency to an unparalleled extent, is a *sign of the times* that must be evident to all. The last sign instanced by the Archdeacon is the drying up of the *Euphrates* which takes place at the pouring out of the sixth vial; (Rev. xvi. 12,) which he understands, in common with most other modern interpreters, to be the weakening or exhaustion of the Turkish power, which has been remarkably witnessed of late, by the loss of its

Greek provinces, the destruction of its fleet at Navarino, the rebellion of the Bey of Egypt, the occupation of Algiers by the French, and of some of the fairest provinces nearer home by the Russians.

The venerable Author then goes on to state, "that he is aware that the wild reveries of some interpreters, and the pestilential heresies of others, have excited a prejudice against any attempt to investigate those predictions which relate exclusively to the future; but that the folly of the former and the perverseness of the latter, cannot annul the blessing pronounced at the commencement of the Apocalypse upon those who read, hear and keep those things which are written therein;" and therefore, though he deprecates the attempt to penetrate into the *precise time* when the prophecies now in course of fulfilment will receive their definitive accomplishment, he nevertheless proceeds to point out those more prominent changes which appear to be impending, and which are as follow: "that Popery and Mahommedanism, with every other anti-christian power, will be exterminated from the face of the earth—that Jews and Gentiles will be converted to the christian faith—and that those stupendous revolutions will be either preceded or accompanied (or in all probability, both the one and the other) with *judgements of an inexpressibly awful character.*"

We must refer the reader to the work itself for the scriptural data on which these conclusions are founded. It must be obvious to those at all acquainted with the subject, that it would be impossible to do justice to the numerous topics adverted to within the compass of a Visitation Charge: but this defect is in some measure supplied by a copious appendix, containing extracts from various writers elucidating the author's

views. We cannot better conclude than with his own words.

"I will observe in conclusion, that Archbishop Usher is said to have had a presentiment of the impending final struggle between Popery and Protestantism. As the anticipations formed by this eminent prelate of the issue of this conflict are of an encouraging nature, and have evidently a bearing upon the subject which has been under discussion, I will submit them to your thoughtful consideration.—"The greatest stroke upon the Reformed Churches is yet to come; and the time of the utter ruin of the See of Rome shall be when she thinks herself most secure."—One presuming to inquire of him, what his present apprehensions were concerning a very great persecution, he answered; "that a very great persecution would fall upon all the Protestant Churches in Europe;" adding, "I tell you, all you have yet seen hath been but the beginning of sorrows, to what is yet to come upon the Protestant Churches of Christ, which will ere long fall under a sharper persecution than ever. Therefore (said he,) look you be not found in the outer court, but a worshiper in the temple before the altar. For Christ will measure all that profess his Name, and call themselves his people: and the outward worshippers he will leave out to be trodden down of the Gentiles. The outer court is the formal christians whose religion consists in performing the outward duties of christianity, without having an inward life and power of faith uniting them to Christ; and these God will leave to be trodden down and swept away by the Gentiles. But the worshippers within the temple and before the altar God will hide in the hollow of his hand and under the shadow of his wings. And this shall be one great difference between the last and all the other preceding persecutions. For in the former, the most eminent and spiritual ministers and christians did generally suffer most, and were most violently fallen upon. But in this last persecution, these shall be preserved by God, as a seed to partake of that glory which shall immediately follow and come upon the Church, as soon as ever this storm shall be over. For as it shall be the sharpest, so shall it be the shortest persecution of them all; and shall only take away the gross hypocrites and formal professors; but the true spiritual believers shall be preserved till the calamity be over." P. 40, quoted from the Appendix to Fleming's "Apocalyptical Key."

(3.) *Extracts on Prophecy, chiefly concerning the approaching Advent and Kingdom of Christ.*

Glasgow, Begg; London, Burns; 12mo. 4s. 6d.

The mention of the appendix to Archdeacon Brown's Visitation Charge, containing *Extracts* illustrative of the subject he has treated, reminds us of the above interesting volume. It is the method of the Lord, not to pour out upon one individual member of his church *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; but to divide to every man severally as he will; and thus it is given to one individual to treat some particular portion of his prophetic word with a force and clearness which is not given to another. A volume therefore which brings to a focus the light which has thus opened upon various interpreters of the word

of prophecy, necessarily possesses much interest.

The Selector of these *Extracts* has made a judicious arrangement of the various subjects, which augments the value of the whole; and the Reader will at once, we think, conclude that we cannot easily overrate the work, when we inform him, that it contains complete passages on detached subjects by such writers of by-gone days, as Fletcher, Goodwin, Mede, Newton and Toplady; and of the present day, as Anderson, Begg, Bickersteth, Cuninghame, Dodsworth, Fry, Hooper, Keith, Madden, Maitland, Marsh, Melvill, Noel, Pym, Sabin, Simon and Stewart. There are a few other names which might startle at first, but the Compiler has in these instances carefully selected what is good and omitted what has appeared questionable.

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Correspondence, etc.

MATTHEW XXIV. 34.—“*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*”

To the Editor of the Investigator.
Sir,

In the last Volume of the Investigator there was a paper of mine, advocating the reading of *αυτη* without the aspirate, in the expression *ἡ γενεα αυτη* (Matt. xxiv. 34, &c.) in the sense that “*that generation* (the generation existing at the beginning of the last troubles) should not pass away till all was fulfilled.” I have heard it objected that *εκεινη* would in this case have been the pronoun chosen; and that the use of *αυτη* with the article in the sense of *εκεινη* is questionable. It is therefore necessary to fortify the interpretation by parallel examples. This I beg leave to do now.

My first example is the one given by the original suggester of the reading advocated in the Christian Observer; (vol. xiv. p. 6.)

Αυτη αυτη τη ωρα επισασα, she coming in at that instant (Luke ii. 38);—in which verse we see in immediate juxtaposition the *αυτη* with the aspirate and the *αυτη* without.

The same, or similar phrases, occur in Luke vii. 21; xii. 12; xx. 19; xxiii. 12; xxiv. 33; Acts xvi. 18; xxii. 13: also in Dan. iii. 6, 15; iv. 33; v. 5 in the Septuagint. In all these passages *αυτη* is translated in much the same sense as *εκεινη*; so that, indeed, in the parallel to one of them Matthew uses *εκεινη* where Luke uses *αυτη*: thus, Luke xii. 12, *το γαρ αγιον Πνευμα διδασκει υμας εν αυτη τη ωρα ὃ δει ειπειν*:—Matt. x. 19, *δοθησεται γαρ υμιν εν εκεινη τη ωρα ὃ δει ειπειν*. The chief difference is that the *αυτη* is more emphatic than the *εκεινη*. In the passage from St. Luke just given the

exact rendering would be “*in that same, that very hour*;” and in the passage under consideration (with the *αυτη*) “*that very generation shall not pass away till all has been fulfilled.*”

There is a further observation that I would wish to make on this passage. I find the writer in the Christian Observer estimating *the length of time* implied in the *αυτη ἡ γενεα* *ε μη παρελθῃ* at 30 years. And thus, dating the commencement of the term, as I do myself, from the French Revolution in 1792, he thus writes at the close of the year 1814; “*According to the view I have taken of this prophecy 22 of these 30 years are already past: only 8 remain to be fulfilled.*—Our redemption draweth nigh.”

We see in this, as it appears to me, a mistake not uncommon; so that it may be of use to notice and rectify it. I feel the rather bound to do this as having formerly written under the mistake myself.

I would observe then, that the duration implied in any expression involving *γενεα* cannot be determined *independently of the verb or other words in immediate context*. This must appear almost a truism. But it has been frequently overlooked;—by myself, as I said, among others.

If the case were this, that we had a *genealogical table* under consideration of father, eldest son, grandson, &c. for many successive *γενεαι* or generations, then the nature of the case would determine the *γενεα* of the *father* as ending with *the birth of the eldest son* succeeding him, and the average length of the *γενεα* must be the average age at which a

man has that son born to him.* This under usual circumstances and in settled countries has been found to be about 30 years. And hence, in the want of more accurate chronological data, use has been made of genealogical tables of this kind, and the length of an historical period approximated to by the multiplication of the number of *yevea* into 30 years.—For instance, in Matt. i. 17 we read that there were from David to the Babylonish captivity 14 generations. As this was in the succession of *eldest* sons† the rule of calculation is applicable; and, supposing *all* the generations to have been specified by the Evangelist, we might consider 14×30 or 420 years as an approximation to the true term of years included. In effect *three* generations (viz. of Azariah, Joash, Amaziah,) are omitted by him in his brief summary. The true number, therefore, is 17; giving 17×30 or 510 as the term of years from David to Jehoiakim,—a term differing but a little from the true.

But when the chronological term to be inquired into is defined, not by a *succession of generations*, but by *the passing away of any particular generation*, then the question will be, not at what time the generation spoken of may have given birth to a generation of sons to succeed them, but (just as in a *tontine* of cotemporaries) at what time they will *all themselves have died off*;—when, as the wise man says, “One genera-

tion shall have passed away, and another come.” (Eccl. i. 4.)

How soon this *passing away* of a generation shall take place must depend on two things,—*the length of human life* (which from soon after Joshua’s time has been pretty much the same as now) and the *actual age* of the generation at the time when the question is taken up concerning it.

Take *first* the case of that generation of Israelites on which the sentence was pronounced at Kadesh Barnea, that they should all perish in the wilderness. The age of man might be thought from Moses’ Psalm to have been then, for the most part, nearly the same as now. ‡ If so, in about 80 or 90 years (say 85) from *birth*, or 65 from the *passing of the sentence* on them,—the generation then twenty years old might (together with those older than themselves) have been expected, in the *natural* course of things, to pass away. It was by the direct intervention of a judicial providence that that period was shortened from 65 to 38 years.

Again, take that passage from Judges ii. 7—10, on which depends the contested chronology of the interregnum between Joshua’s death and Israel’s first apostasy and servitude. “Israel served the Lord all ‘the days of Joshua, and all the ‘the days of the *elders that overlived* ‘Joshua who had seen all the great ‘works of the Lord which he did ‘for Israel. But Joshua died, and ‘also all *that* generation were gather-

* i.e. The *yevea* “à sementi in sementem.” | Censorinus apud Larcher, Herod. vol. vii.

† In the two other fourteens mentioned in this verse of St. Matthew the rule is not applicable, because neither in the one nor the other,—the line *from Abraham to David*, nor the line *from the Captivity to Christ*, is the succession that of *eldest* sons. In no less than four cases of the *first* fourteen (Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David,) the sons specified were the sons of their fathers’ extreme old age. (See Whitby.) Hence a vastly greater length to the chronological period than 14×30 years.—The tables chiefly applied in this way in early *profane* history are tables of *kings*, and consequently, for the most part, of *eldest* sons.

‡ This is, however, doubtful. It seems most probable to me that the statement at v. 10 of this Psalm has reference to the premature old age of the Israelites then living under the withering influence of God’s anger. Soon after Joshua’s time life seems to have been generally abbreviated.

'ed to their fathers, and there arose 'another generation." Comparing the first verse of this passage with Deut. xi. 3, 4, it would seem that the miracles in Egypt and against Pharaoh were comprehended in "all the great works" spoken of as witnessed and to be testified to by these elders. Now, in order to their being competent witnesses on the subject, we cannot suppose them of less than 12 or 15 years old at the time of those miracles. Consequently, the natural time of that generation passing away would be in about (85 — 15) or 70 years from the Exodus, i. e. 30 from Moses' death and the entrance into the land of Canaan. Mr. Clinton, by approximation, makes it 27 from the death of Moses.

As regards the passage under consideration it will be observed that the *αὐτὴ ἡ γενεά* of the Evangelist is designated simply as the generation *in existence* at the commencement of the shaking of the nations, not as being then of *competent age* (as in the last example) to *witness* to the shaking. We may therefore suppose it at the time of the French Revolution to have but recently come into existence; and, consequently, that in about 85 years from that time, i. e. in 1875 or thereabout, it would be likely in the course of nature to have passed away. This seems the chronological *limit* given us. As was observed in my former paper, it is *before* that generation shall have passed away, and while there are still a few septuagenarian and octogenarian survivors from it, that the consummation of the prophecy is to be expected.

E.

N. B. May I be allowed to mention two misprints of consequence in the paper alluded to, both of them at p. 335.—At line 15 there should be read 6th, 8th, and 9th for 5th, 7th, and 9th: also in the Table of post-diluvian patriarchs, the LXX should head the *third* column of figures, Josephus the *fourth*.

A Correspondent has also in a private communication favoured us with "a hint" confirmatory of the above view of our Correspondent E: it having always (he says) appeared to him, that the true meaning of *ἡ γενεά αὐτῆς* (Luke xxi. 22,) was—"This generation, *of* which I am speaking; not *in* which I am living." We shall give it in his words.

"In Luke xvii. 34, we read *ταύτῃ τῇ νύκτι, κ. τ. λ.* Here it is so evident that the words relate to some future night *of* which our Lord was speaking, and not to the night which was to commence at the close of the day *in* which these words were spoken, that our Translators have properly rendered the passage "In *that* night." No change of accents even is therefore necessary to justify—"that generation shall not pass away &c:" i. e. the generation of men, whenever it be, that sees the *commencement* of the signs, will assuredly see the end of them. Individuals may die in the midst of their generation: but some of those then living shall be also among the *quick* at the Second Advent. If that time be, as many suppose, one of unparalleled tribulation, the consideration that the time is short will be most valuable."

Ed.

Reprints and Extracts.

SIX PROPHETICAL SERMONS—BY J. GILL, D.D.

Preached in Great Eastcheap, 1750—5.

Under this head we purpose to bring forward interesting passages from the works of scarce and approved authors, and sometimes (as in the present instance) to give a condensed summary of an entire work.

We begin with the *Six Prophetical Sermons* of the eminent Dr. Gill. Some things therein would now be placed by us in a somewhat different position; and frequently we think he takes in a *mystical* sense passages which will ultimately have a *literal* fulfilment; but they contain nevertheless much which we are persuaded will be read with interest in the present day; especially when it is remembered, that he wrote of *France* prior to the bursting out of the Revolution, and of the *Turk* when he was in the zenith of his power. At the same time we must be understood as placing these, and other things to be brought forward, before the Reader, not as concurring in all that an author may state, but because we think the sentiments of the earlier eminent Expositors ought to be known.

The circumstance which gave rise to them was an annual Sermon, appointed by Dissenters of different denominations to be preached at Eastcheap, in order to revive the attention of Christians toward Prophecy; and some prophetical subject was consequently taken by the minister on these occasions.

SERMON I.

ISAIAH, XXI. 11, 12. *The burden of Dumah. He called to me out of Seir, 'Watchman, what of the night?'—The Watchman said, 'The morning cometh, and also the night: If ye will enquire, enquire ye—return—come.'*

First he notices the context: that the chapter begins with "The Burden [or Oracle] of the desert of the sea, or plain of the sea." This describes *Babylon*, as named in v. 9. It was built on a *plain*, and in a *watery* place by the river Euphrates; and the Jewish writers call any confluence of waters a *sea*. Its destruction by the Medes and Persians is foretold; (v. 2.) who are signified also by a couple of horsemen. (v. 7.) The whole may be accommodated to *mystical Babylon*; who is repre-

sented as in a *wilderness* sitting upon *many waters*; whose destruction will be by the *lion* of the tribe of Judah, and is expressed in the *self same words*. Compare vv. 1, 8, 9, 10, with Rev. xvii. 1, 3, 5; xix. 11—20; and xviii. 2, 4.

The Burden, *DUMAH*, some think respects the *Dumean Arabians*, and others the *Idumeans* or Edomites.—Dr. Gill decidedly thinks the latter are intended;—1st because the Septuagint renders it—"The vision of *Idumea*." 2nd. The Arabic version calls it—"A prophecy concerning *Edom* and *Seir*." 3rd. Because the cry is out of *Seir* which was the mount of the Edomites. (Gen. xxxvi. 8.) 4th. Because the next verses contain a distinct burden concerning Arabia. The prophecy may refer therefore to the time when Edom and Seir should

be a possession for his enemies; (Numb. xxiv. 18) which was fulfilled before the coming of Christ, when the Jews and Idumeans were mixed together, and many of the latter embraced the Jewish religion,* and thus had knowledge of the Messiah and his coming; and perhaps some did savingly believe in him. Some one of these, or of the other Jews in Idumea, may be thought to be here enquiring after him, When he would come and put an end to the night of darkness. Edom may also be considered as a type of Antichrist. And Jerom says,† that some of the Hebrews read *Roma* for *Dumah* in this place, and suppose the Roman empire to be designed: and certainly nothing is more common with the Jews than to call the Roman empire, and Rome itself, *Edom*, and the Romans or Papists *Edomites*. And as in the darkest times of popery some have risen up within her as witnesses of the truth, and have inquired, When the night of popish darkness would be over; so a little before the destruction of mystic Babylon, God will have a people, whom he will call out of the midst of her; (Rev. xviii. 4;) and these, sensible of the darkness they are in, may be supposed to be enquiring after the latter day light and glory.

He then discusses the subject under the following heads: I. Who is the *Watchman*; II.—The *question* twice put to him; III. The *direct reply*; IV. The *exhortation* added.

I. By the term *Watchman* Dr. Gill supposes a *prophet* or *minister of the word* to be signified; for Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are each of them called *Watchmen*—and ministers in general are so called in Cant. iii. 3, 7; Isa. lxi. 8; lxii. 6. He conceives the four living creatures in Rev. iv. 6, 8, who are full of *eyes*, to be emblems of the gospel minis-

ters. Moreover he considers it the special office of such watchmen not only to be on the look out in the night against dangers and enemies, but to inform their people of the *time of night*: (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

“In order to which, it is necessary ‘to study the prophetic part of the ‘New Testament, particularly the ‘book of the Revelation; and which, ‘according to its name, is a *revelation*, and not a *secret*;—an *open* ‘and not a *sealed* book; and *blessed* ‘is he that *READETH* this book, not ‘only privately, but in *public*, in ‘order to explain it to others; and ‘*blessed are they that HEAR the words* ‘*of this prophecy* explained by their ‘minister: so the one will be ready ‘to ask, and the other to answer, ‘the question here proposed.”

II. The question, “*What of the night?*”—It is repeated, as if there were panic or anxiety; and may signify, what *from* the night; what sayest thou *concerning* the night—the night of darkness and affliction in which we now are? what time of night is it? when will it be over?

This he thinks may refer to the night before the coming of Messiah, which existed, not only in the Gentile world, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death; (Matt. iv. 16.) but also under the Jewish dispensation, which consisted in obscure shadows and types. (Cant. iv. 6.) There were indeed *stars* to give light, viz. the prophets and ministers of the word; and the word itself was a *lamp* for the feet; yet ‘the day spring from on high,’—‘the bright and *morning* star,’—‘the sun of righteousness,’ had not yet risen; and the church was looking for him to come as “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.”

He considers, that it might respect this night; and states that there

* Josephus, Lib. xiii. Chap. ix. sect. 1. † In Loco.

were several prophecies which pointed to the time of Christ's coming, and served to direct the answer: e. g. Judah was not to cease to be a tribe, and the second temple was not to be destroyed, till Messiah should come (Gen. XLIX. 10; Mal. III. 1.) Hints were given by the prophets, that he was coming (Isa. xxxv. 4; Hab. II. 1, 3; Zech. ix. 9.) And Daniel fixes the very time of his coming—viz. seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, from a date which he gives. "By these hints of the watchmen, 'and especially the last, the people knew what time of night it was, 'and how long it would be to the coming of the Messiah, and lived 'in expectation of it. R. Nehumiah, 'that lived about fifty years before 'the coming of Christ, gave out that 'the time of the Messiah signified by 'Daniel could not be protracted longer than those fifty years; and about 'the time he did come we find that 'there was, among the people of the Jews, a general expectation of him: 'good old Simeon was waiting for 'the consolation of Israel; and Anna 'the prophetess spoke of him to 'them that looked for redemption 'in Jerusalem; and when John the Baptist his forerunner appeared, all 'the people were in expectation, 'and mused in their hearts whether 'he were the Christ or no." (Luke II. 25, 28; and III. 15.)

III. In treating the watchman's answer to the question—*The morning cometh, and also the night*—he asserts, that there will be a constant revolution of night (or seasons of adversity and darkness) with morning (or prosperity and light) unto the end of time.

The first coming of Christ he considers to be the *morning* principally intended in the text: which he maintains from 2 Sam. xxiii. 4; and Hos. vi. 3, and shews the progress

of the light which then arose. But *night* followed very quickly to the Jews, who loved darkness rather than light, and with whom the night has therefore judicially remained ever since. And after the time of Constantine night came upon the Gentile world, being led on by Mahomet in the east, and by *the man of sin* (whom he considers to be the Romish Antichrist,) in the west. This state of things he thinks is represented by the Church of Thyatira. (Rev. II. 20—24.) But with the *Reformation* another morning appeared, expressed by the '*morning star*' (v. 29,) promised to those in Thyatira who overcame; and this, brought on the Sardinian church state. In process of time however the Reformation went backwards instead of forwards; things had been declining down to his own times, at which period he considered that a *night* was coming; for a sleepy spirit had seized ministers and churches, which he anticipated would end in a general forsaking of God's house, and of Gospel ministers; so that even professors would be shy of *truly devoted* ministers, neither hearing them, nor receiving them into their houses: and this he thinks is one part of the meaning of the dead bodies of *the witnesses* not being suffered to be put into graves:—viz. that the light of the gospel will be thus wholly withdrawn; and the witnesses will cease prophesying, their testimony being finished.

If asked the question, (he continues,) Watchman, what of the night? he would fix the time to be the *end* of the Sardinian church state; the reformed churches having then only a *name* to live, and being dead in regard to the life and power of true religion; though there were a *few* among them, who had not defiled their garments. Their times he thinks described by Zechariah XIV.

6, 7, and the dismal night itself he states must be preceded by the slaying of the witnesses and the universal spread of popery. This slaying of the witnesses he considers must be *universal* throughout christendom; and therefore not fulfilled by the burning of protestants in Queen Mary's time; nor by the popish reign of James II; nor by the temporary expulsion of the protestants from Piedmont by the duke of Savoy; all which events occupied about three years and a half, and were by some therefore supposed to be intended: though he thinks that these events may be for *hints* or *pledges* of the greater one. He assigns several reasons for concluding, that the witnesses *could not then* have been slain; the most cogent of which appears to be, that in that case a great earthquake or revolution ought to have taken place, destroying a tenth of the papal city; (which he thinks means *France*;) and the Turkish empire ought to be passing away, which was then in great power.* He thinks that from Rev. xviii. 7, may be gathered, that the papacy would revive and be in its greatest security just before its overthrow; and conceived, that though as a secular prince the Pope's authority was declining, yet that popery itself was then gaining ground; whilst the reformed churches and protestant dissenters were falling into doctrines and practices which naturally led to popery. He concludes this point as follows: "Now in all that I have said I do not pretend to any extraordinary impulse from God, or to any prophetic spirit, but ground all upon the word of God; and if what I have said does not appear from thence, and upon the face of things in providence, I have no

'pretensions to any thing else to support my opinion with, and as such only I deliver it."

After this dark night he expects another *morning*, the *spiritual* reign of Christ, symbolized by the Philadelphian church state; in which the vials of wrath are to be poured out upon the antichristian states, knowledge shall be increased, multitudes converted, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, and the Jews restored. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and the marriage of the Lamb will be come. (Isa. xi. 9; xxx. 26; li. 1; Rev. xi. 15—17; Ps. lxxii. 7—11.)

Yet sure as this morning comes a *night* is to follow—not of persecution, but of coldness and carnal security, represented by the Laodicean state; (Rev. iii. 15, 16;) whilst the threat of Christ, that the church is to be spued out of his mouth, shews that she is to be cast off for her apostacy. See also Luke xvii. 26—29.

Another *morning* is to succeed, which will consist of the *personal* reign of Christ for "a *thousand years*," which will be "*as one day*." Then will take place the first resurrection; after which there will be no further night to the *saints*, which he gathers from Isa. lx. 19, 20, and Rev. xxi. 23.

IV. He concludes with the exhortation, "*If ye will enquire, enquire ye; return, come:*" shewing first, that we should search the scripture, specially the prophetic parts of it, and more particularly the book of Revelation; that we should add to this *prayer and supplication*, as Daniel did; and enquire with modesty and humility. Secondly, that we should *return* to the Lord by faith and repentance, (Rev. iii. 2, 3.) Thirdly,

* He incidentally mentions the wilful king in Dan. xi. 36, whom he considers to be the Pope; and the "glorious holy mountain," in which he will plant the tabernacles of his palaces, Great Britain. v. 45.

that we should *come* to the Lord and take of the water of life freely. Rev. XXII. 17.

SERMON II.

1. CHRON. XII. 23. *And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do ; the heads of them were two hundred ; and all their brethren were at their commandment.*

This sermon is added by Dr. Gill, in the way of further practical improvement of the Watchman's answer.

After noticing the great influence which these two hundred men had over their tribe, all their brethren being at their commandment, he inquires, "in what their *understanding* might consist."

He reviews and rejects the various opinions of Jewish and Christian commentators on this point ; as that they were *chronologers* or *astronomers*, whereby they fixed the times of the great festivals,—that they were *astrologers*, and also useful to the agriculturist, to prognosticate the weather and seasons ;—that they were *historians*, and therefore could in doubtful cases refer to precedents.

He himself inclines to the opinion that their understanding was a political prudence, grounded on a knowledge of the prophecies of God ; and that in the particular instance connected with the text it is evident from verse 23, that they were encouraged to turn the kingdom to David at this juncture, by a prediction which was known in Saul's life time. And the use he makes of this interpretation is to insist, that those who have any understanding of *prophetic times*, relating to the Church of Christ, should inform the Israel of God, what they ought to do in them or in the prospects of them.

I. He observes, that there are some times and seasons the knowledge of which is not to be attained

unto ; but there are other remarkable events pointed at in prophecy, which may be known by diligence and application. He instances Daniel, who knew the period of the termination of the Babylonish captivity by studying the writings of Jeremiah, in which dates were given ; and states that the time of the coming of Messiah was equally well known by studying the writings of Daniel.—

"There is also a time set (he continues) for his *second coming* ; and "God in his times will shew him ;" (1 Tim. VI. 15;) and though he will come in an *hour* we know not of, yet are there circumstances pointed out in the word of God, by which it may be known that it is nigh at hand :—as that the day, when the Son of Man shall be revealed, shall be as the days of Noah and Lot, when men indulged themselves in pleasure, lived in great security, unaware of the ruin coming upon them ; and that when the Son of man cometh *faith* will not be found in the earth ; (whether it be understood of the grace of faith, or of faith with respect to Christ's coming ;) and when we compare these things with the present time, and consider the luxury, love of pleasure, carnal security and infidelity that abound among us, we might conclude that the coming of Christ is just at hand ; were it not that there are many things which require to be previously fulfilled."

He refers to the Book of Revelation in particular, as a guide to understand the times ; conceiving the message to the seven Churches of Asia prophetic of the *condition* of the Church of Christ from the time of John to the end of time. From this book he gathered, that the Philadelphia church state was then to come ; which he says is to be distinguished by an open door of the gospel, "large conversions of Jews and Gentiles, much holiness and

' brotherly love, and great spiritual-
' ity ; after which the church, being
' proud of its gifts and the Spirit
' withdrawing, will sink into luke-
' warmth and security ; which will
' bring on the Laodicean state, which
' will issue in the general judgment."

" Moreover, there are certain very
' memorable events, the dates of
' which are peremptorily fixed : as
' the treading of the holy city forty
' two months ; the witnesses pro-
' phesying in sackcloth and under
' discouragements 1260 days ; during
' which term also the Church is to
' be nourished in the wilderness
' even for a time, times and half a
' time ; and power is given to the
' beast or antichrist to continue for-
' ty and two months ;^a—all which
' began and will end together. For
' these dates are actually the same ;
' 1260 days being 42 months ; (reck-
' oning thirty days to a month,
' as was customary in the Eastern
' nations ;) and could we be certain
' when these dates begin, we should
' have no difficulty about the expira-
' tion of them, or how long it is
' to it. Good men have been mis-
' taken in their calculations for want
' of this. But though we can come
' at no certainty as to the *precise*
' time, when these things shall be ;
' yet some degree of understand-
' ing of them may be come at : and
' from the circumstances of things
' it may be concluded, that these
' dates *cannot* reach beyond a *hun-*
' *dred and fifty years more* ; and it
' may be, they may expire much
' sooner."

II. Under the next head he shews,
that those who have skill in prophe-
tic times should make known to the
Israel of God, *what they ought to do*
in prospect of those things to come.

First, of good works in general
he instances obedience to the moral
commands of God ; attention to re-

ligious ordinances ; to be instant
prayer ; and to regard the concerns
both temporal and spiritual of their
fellow creatures. (2.) The Israel of
God *ought* to do these things, not
for justification, but because it is
the will of God ; because they are
useful to men and profitable by way
of example : and they are in them-
selves honest, pure and of good re-
port. (3.) God's Israel ought most
especially to do them, because they
were fore-ordained, created, and re-
deemed to them ;^b and they are
the only persons in a proper capaci-
ty to do them.^c

Secondly, there are some things
in *particular* which the Israel of God
are to do, according to the times in
which they live, or which they ex-
pect. From Revelation II. 4, 5, and
1 Cor. XIV. 13, he shews the need
of watchfulness, of jealousy for the
truth, of penitence for our coldness
in regard to it, of courage to make
it known, of sticking close to God's
word, of a readiness to meet Him,
and of a preparation to endure af-
fliction.

In urging believers to " hold fast"
to the doctrine of the *Reformation*,
which they had " heard and receiv-
ed," his words are worthy of note :
—" If you would keep the enemy
' from *within*, preserve your *out-*
' *works* ; stand by them, quit not
' even such as may seem of the least
' importance ; dispute every inch of
' ground ; give not way in any thing,
' nor for any time, *no not for an hour*,
' *that the truth of the gospel may con-*
' *tinue with you* :^d 'tis this giving up
' of one thing after another that is
' the ruin of us. What is the reason
' that *deism* has had such a spread
' among us of late years ? Among
' the rest, not only is it owing to
' the books wrote against Christian-
' ity, but to the weak answers to
' them, and feeble defences of it :

^a Rev. XI. 2, 3 ; XII. 6, 14 ; XIII. 5.

^c 2 Tim. II. 21.

^b Ephes. I. 4 ; II. 10 ; Tit. II. 14.

^d Gal. II. 5.

' one truth of the Bible being given
' up after another, till at length there
' is scarce any thing left worth con-
' tending for. And so it is in other
' controversies among those that are
' called Christians;—something is
' generally given up on the side of
' truth, for which the writer is com-
' plimented as an ingenious man,
' and a man of good sense; this proves
' a snare to him, and whenever he
' writes again, he'll give up some-
' thing more to confirm his charac-
' ter ; or another will start up, and
' take the same method, observing
' which way the stream of reputa-
' tion runs ; whilst those on the other
' side secretly laugh at them ; and
' thus are we likely to be wheedled
' and cajoled out of truth, by artful
' and designing men on the one hand,
' and through the weakness of some
' on the other ; and we shall have
' more and more of this giving up
' of truth, as the night we are enter-
' ing into grows darker and darker."

His concluding words, after he
has spoken of the night of affliction,
are as follow.—

" And now, as to the morning that
' will follow after, this you should
' most firmly believe;—though scoff-
' ers may mock at it, and carnal
' professors be unconcerned about it
' and give no credit to it ;—yet suf-
' fer yourselves, a little while, and
' He that shall come will come, and
' will not tarry. Pray for his king-
' dom and coming ; give him no rest
' day or night, till he arise and have
' mercy on Zion, and make his Je-
' rusalem the praise of the whole
' earth ; be hasting in your warm
' affections and earnest desires after
' those glorious times, which God
' will hasten in his own time ; and
' in the darkest season look for this
' morning, for *at evening-time it shall*
' *be light* ;^e and a glorious one it
' will be, 'as a morning when the sun
' rises, a morning without clouds.' I

' shall close all with those words of
' our Lord ; *Let your loins be girded*
' *about, and your lights burning, and*
' *ye yourselves like unto men that wait*
' *for the coming of their Lord.* And
' now, as I have shewn you what
' Israel ought to do in those times,
' *Blessed is that servant whom his*
' *Lord, when he cometh, shall find so*
' *doing."* Luke XII. 36, 37.

SERMON. III.

PSALM, LXXXVII. 3. *Glorious things
are spoken of thee, O city of God.*

The discourse begins with an ex-
position of the previous verses. The
title of the Syriac version is, "*Con-
cerning the redemption of Jerusalem.*"
Like Canticles, it abruptly begins
with a relative without an antece-
dent : "*His foundation is in the*
holy mountains," (or mountains of
holiness :) in allusion either to the
Zion and Moriah on which the tem-
ple stood, or to the mountains round
about Jerusalem, both which he con-
siders to be types of the Church.
Zion (in verse 2) he considers as
another name for the church ; and
her *gates* as representing her public
worship and ordinances, which the
Lord loveth "more than all the
dwellings of Jacob," i. e. more than
the private habitations of his people,
though in these he hath delighted of
old by anticipation. (Prov. VIII. 31.)
Thus he concludes, that the words
—" *Glorious things are spoken of*
thee, O city of God ;" are not to be
understood literally of Jerusalem ;
but figuratively of the Church, here
compared to a city. Whatever glorious
things, therefore, have been spoken
of the church in times past, he sup-
poses are intended in the text ; but
he confines himself to those which
are to be accomplished both in the
spiritual and *personal* reigns of
Christ ; " which two things (he
' says) are very distinct, and lie at

^e Zech. XIV. 7.

‘ some distance from each other, and
 ‘ ought to be carefully distinguished
 ‘ and not confounded : by the help of
 ‘ which distinction we may better
 ‘ understand many prophecies of the
 ‘ Old Testament, which are to be
 ‘ ranged under these different heads,
 ‘ and to be referred to these distinct
 ‘ periods of time.”

He especially rests this distinction upon a comparison of Isaiah l.x. 11, with Rev. xxi. 25, from the former of which passages he seems to imply,* that there will be the alternation of *day and night* in the spiritual reign ; but *no night* at all in the personal reign.

By the spiritual reign he does not mean—the authority which Christ now has from being seated at the right hand of the throne of God, neither his ruling by his Spirit in the hearts of his people ; but a period of time to be eminent for spirituality, and which he then considered *future*. (See before, pages 52, 53.)

1. The events immediately to lead to it are the ascending of the witnesses into heaven ; the blowing of the seventh trumpet ; and the destruction of antichrist by the Spirit of Christ’s mouth, “ and the brightness of his coming ;” (2 Thess. ii. 8.) which text he interprets as of a *spiritual*, not a *literal* coming.

The removal of antichrist he conceives will be greatly effected by the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath, none of which, as he concludes, had then taken place. The *angels* who pour them out he interprets to be *protestant kings, princes, and generals of armies* ; and for as much as the vials are given to them by one of the four living creatures, (whom he makes emblems of gospel ministers,) he supposes that these princes will be incited to take the work in hand by the minister of re-

ligion, and that therefore they, (the princes) are said to go forth from the temple—the place in which they have received orders for their work. (Rev. xv. 1—7 : xvi. 1.)

He explains the subjects of the seven last plagues as follows :

1st vial is poured on the *earth*—i. e. on the continental countries of papal Rome ; as France and Germany. 2nd on the *sea*, or maritime powers ; as Spain and Portugal. 3rd on the *rivers and fountains of waters*, or places adjacent to Rome ; as Italy and Savoy. 4th on the *sun*, which is the Pope personally with his cardinals, bishops, &c. 5th on the *seat of the beast*, which is Rome. 6th on the *river Euphrates*, or Turkish empire, which will make way for the *kings*, or kingdoms of the *East*, as Persia and Tartary, to receive the Christian religion. 7th on the *air*, i. e. the whole kingdom of Satan, who is the prince of the power of the air ; and this will clear the *world* of all false religion. He notices also a great resemblance between these vials and the plagues sent on Egypt ; whence he thinks the great city “ is spiritually called *Sodom and Egypt* ;”—as, the noisome sore and the boils and blains ; the waters turned into blood in both instances ; the beast’s kingdom filled with darkness, and the thick darkness of Egypt ; the three spirits like frogs, and the frogs in Pharaoh’s court ; the great hail storm of the seventh vial, and the plague of hail. He did not consider any of them to be poured out (though some great and learned men had thought the contrary,) because they had not yet seen any such devastations on the continent—France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Savoy and the places near Rome, to produce the effects described ;—“ the Euphrates is not dried up ; the Turk-

* Doctor Gill does not express his meaning clearly on these texts ; if the sense be as he intended it, he makes verse 11 of Isaiah l.x. to refer to the *spiritual* reign, and in the very next sentence verse 20 of the same chapter to the *personal* reign,

ish woe is not passed away, &c.—and before this work is done the outer court must be given to the Gentiles,* and the witnesses slain.”

2. There will follow, after the outpouring of the vials, (as the author conceives,) a general spread of the Gospel. “Now there are but few that preach it in its purity, and the period is apparently arrived which Dr. Owen had in view, of whom it is reported he should say, that the time is coming, when a faithful minister would be *more precious* (i. e. scarce and rare) *than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir.*” But ere long (the author adds) the gospel will have a free course, and run and be glorified. “This will be when *the angel*—not any particular minister, as Luther, or any other, but a set of gospel ministers in the latter day, so called from their office,—*shall fly in the midst of heaven*, discharging their office in the most public manner in the church of God,” and with a commission to preach it to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people: (Rev. xiv. 6,) they will be *many* and will *run to and fro* and by this means knowledge will be *increased*. (Dan. xii.) The doctrines they preach are the *living waters* which are to go out of Jerusalem (the church) towards the former and hinder seas. (Zech. xiv. 8.) There will be large conversions in different parts of the world, and the ten kings which have been associates of antichrist shall withdraw from him, and embrace the pure gospel.† “In the Mahometan nations, the Turkish woe being past, and that empire being destroyed,

and way made for the gospel to be carried into the eastern kingdoms, great and large conversions will be made by it. There is a most glaring prophecy of this in Isa. lx. 7, which whole chapter concerns the spiritual and personal reign of Christ; *All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.* Now Kedar and Nebaioth were the sons of Ishmael, (Gen. xxv. 13,) who settled in Arabia, the country now possessed by the Turks.” Moreover in all pagan countries the gospel will make its way (Isa. xxv. 7,) and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High (Isa. lx. xlix. Ps. lxxii. Dan. vii.) Not that there will be any change or alteration in the form and order of civil government; for it will not be until the personal reign of Christ that all rule, authority and power will be *put down*. (1 Cor. xv. 24.)

But I must not forget the conversion of the Jews, who have been preserved a distinct people for so many hundreds of years for this purpose: the conversion of these will be sudden and all of them together. (Isa. lxvi. 8.) It looks as if their conversion would be like that of the apostle Paul, and he seems to hint that he was a pattern (*προς ἑπορωσιν*) of it in 1 Tim. i. 16. Be this as it may “all Israel shall be converted and saved;” (Rom. xi. 26) of which there is a famous prophecy in Hos. iii. 4, 5; which is to take

* He therefore must in this instance have expected the *forty two months* of Rev. xi. 2, to be *literally* fulfilled. How else could its treading down for 1260 years be *future*? Ed.

† We see a falling away from the pope and from Romish institutions of some of these powers: but alas! it is to *infidelity* rather than to “the pure gospel.” We must wait for the Millennial era before we can expect to see these events, or those which he immediately afterwards describes as affecting Turkey and the heathen, fulfilled. Ed.

place in the *latter days*, or the spiritual reign of Christ, as is hinted at in Rev. *iii.* 9; and then great will be the day of Jezreel. (Hos. *i.* 2.)

He considers that there will also be at this time a large effusion of the Holy Spirit; and that Acts *ii.* 17—20 was only partly fulfilled at Pentecost; but that in the spiritual reign the Lord will pour water out of his bucket, and his seed shall be in many waters. (Numb. *xxiv.* 7.)

To this period he likewise fixes many of those texts, commonly referred to the Millennium and personal reign; (as Isa. *liv.* 11—13; Rev. *xi.* 19; Isa. *xi.* 13; Ezek. *xxviii.* 24; Zech. *xiv.* 20, 21; Ps. *lxxii.* 7; Isa. *xi.* 9; *lx.* 18,) so that there will be great light of the gospel, great purity of gospel worship, great prevalence of holiness, and great peace and prosperity.*

3. He next however proceeds to describe the glorious things which are spoken of and will be done in the personal reign of Christ.

Towards the close of the spiritual reign things will be on the decline; the Laodicean church-state will take place; men will be boasting and bragging of their works and gifts, supposing themselves rich and increased with goods and needing nothing; and the wise, as well as the foolish virgins, will slumber as the approach of the bridegroom is near: immorality and profaneness will again overspread the world, as in the days of Lot and Noah; and in this condition will Christ find the

Church.† There will then be a glorious appearing of the Son of God, who will himself personally descend; (1 Thess. *iv.* 16;) every eye shall see him; (Rev. *i.* 7;) and he will stand on the Mount of Olives, (Zech. *xiv.* 4,) on that spot from whence he ascended to heaven. (Acts. *i.* 2, 9—12.) “Job seems to have this descent of his in view when he says—“He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth;” which seems to respect not so much his first coming, as his second; since it is connected with the resurrection of the dead.” He refers to this event and its attendant circumstances, Tit. *ii.* 3, Luke *ix.* 26, and says that he will be attended with his holy angels, “whom he will employ in one kind of service or another, and who will make a considerable figure in this apparatus: to which may be added that *all the saints* will come along with Christ—the souls of all that have departed from the beginning of the world, who will rise together with their bodies.” (Luke *xiv.* 14; Rev. *xx.* 5, 6; Phil. *iii.* 21; 1 Cor. *xv.* 14—44; Matt. *xiii.* 44.) After this will the living saints be changed. “This is *the mystery* the apostle says he would show the Corinthians; and perhaps he was the first man that was led into it, or at least the first that shewed to others, that we shall not all sleep or die, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Cor. *xv.* 51.)—“I have sometimes thought that that change which passes upon the saints at the time I speak of,

* Dr. Rudd, a contemporary dissenting minister, divided the 75 years between the destruction of the beast and the personal coming of Christ thus—30 years for the conversion of the Jews, and 45 years for the spiritual reign. Ed.

† The author has apparently been deceived by what is said of the spread of the gospel in Rev. *xiv.* 6, 7; not perceiving that that preaching is not to *follow* the judgment on the beast, but to *announce* it; and thus he has confounded together the calling out of the election, and the consequent spiritual revival previous to the coming of the Son of man, with the universal prevalence of that gospel which is to follow on it. Making allowance for this, his view of the subject is remarkable, and has been strikingly fulfilled; and is fulfilling (we fear) now, by security, declension, hollowness and deadness in multitudes of professors.—Ed.

when hearts so full of sinful lust and pollution and wickedness will be at once cleared of all, is a greater evidence and display of the power of God, than the change that passes upon their bodies.—This being done these changed living saints shall be caught up together with the raised ones to meet the Lord in the air; (1 Thess. iv. 17,) where it seems as if he and they should stop awhile, until an after event is accomplished.”—

This is the general conflagration (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10,) when there will succeed new heavens and a new earth, (2 Pet. iii. 13, Rev. xxi. 1,) in which the Lord will display his glory. To this period he also refers, Isa. lx. 21, and Rev. xx. 6. During the thousand years will this state continue;—for so long will Satan be bound;—for so long will the saints live and reign with Christ. “But at the close of these years Satan will be loosed again, and the wicked dead will be raised, which with the whole posse of devils will make the Gog and Magog army, who shall be in the four quarters of the world, and go upon the breadth of the earth; and whose number shall be as the sand of the sea, being all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world; a large army indeed, such a one as never was before, consisting of enraged devils, and of men raised with all that malice and wickedness they died in, with Satan at the head of them; by whom they will be animated to make this last feeble and foolish effort, for their recovery and liberty; in order to which they will compass the camp of the saints about the beloved city; who will be in no manner of pain or uneasiness at the appearance of this seeming, formidable army; being clothed with immortality, secured by the power of God, and Christ being in

person with them. Then fire shall come down from heaven and devour the wicked; the wrath of God shall seize, distress, and terrify them; divert them from their purpose, and throw them into utmost consternation and confusion; and then they shall be dragged to the tribunal of Christ, and stand before him, small and great, and be judged according to their works and cast into the lake of fire; where they will be in company with the devil, the beast and false prophet, and be tormented with them for ever and ever.” (Rev. xx. 7—15.)

This will issue in the ultimate glory; when the saints shall be for ever with the Lord; “but my intention being only to give you an account of the glorious things that shall be in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, here I stop, observing—that all this shews that the Church and people of God are the objects of his love;—that the church of Christ is lasting and durable and cannot be destroyed;—and seeing such glorious things are spoken of it, and that by the Lord, we should not doubt but believe, that there will be a performance of them; and we should be looking for them; and when things are at the worst, should lift up our hands with joy; since our redemption draweth nigh.”

“Happy are those that belong to this city, who are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; whose citizenship is in heaven, and they have a right to enter in through the gates into the holy city, the new Jerusalem; but miserable will those be that will be without, *for without are dogs*; and then he that is unjust will be unjust still: and he that is filthy will be filthy still; and he that is righteous, will be righteous still; and he that is holy, will be holy still.” (Rev. xxi. 11.)

Original Essays.

ON THE PROPHETICAL CHARACTER OF THE PSALMS.

No. II.

PSALM II.

Verses 1—3. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, [or CHRIST;] saying,—Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords [or yoke, see Septg.] from us.*

Here is further declared the character and tendency of that "counsel of the ungodly," spoken of in v. 1 of the previous Psalm: it leads to the denial of the Father and the Son,—the very character of the Antichrist of the last times mentioned by St. John: "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."¹ And from what follows—"whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father,"—it seems that many of these will not proceed to the length of atheism, denying God altogether; but like the Socinian or Unitarian, they deny the mystical and hypostatic union of the two; to do which betrays that *they have not the Father.*

Acts iv. 25, shews, that there has been a primary fulfilment of this Psalm at the first Advent in the unnatural union of the Gentile and Jewish rulers,—the apostate Herod and the infidel Pilate,—against the holy child Jesus. But the context shews, that there is to be a further fulfilment; and a time is to come when "the nations are to be *angry*" against Christ, and will rage against him, becoming impatient of his yoke, and endeavouring to break away

from all religious bonds. A specimen has been given already, in a neighbouring nation, at the breaking out of the French Revolution; and the spirit manifested by many of our senators on the bill for the better observance of the Sabbath, and the shrinking from the subject of many others, shews how little the rulers or legislators of this country are in general disposed to submit to the *bonds* of Christ, to take his *yoke* upon them, and to learn of him.

We know further, that this dislike of the yoke will at last grow to a "rage" against godliness; that they will proceed to kill the witnesses of God;² (some think they are already killed, but I cannot fully concur in the opinion;) and make war on the Lamb.³

vv. 4, 5. But they imagine a vain thing—"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure."

It is the character of the last day apostasy, that though the ungodly, who abet and promote it, will cause much inconvenience to the saints, and much evil to prevail in the world for a time, yet they shall not succeed; but as the Lord will make a short work upon the earth,⁴ so will he speedily make manifest their folly unto all men.⁵ He will expose the absurdity of their plans and principles, making them a derision; and instead of their procuring that happiness and that liberty to mankind,

¹ 1 John ii. 22. ² Rev. xi. ³ Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 19. ⁴ Rom. ix. 28.

⁵ 2 Tim. iii. 9.

which they promise to them, the Lord will bring upon them and their followers distress and perplexity,^v vexing them with various judgments, brought on by the influence of their own principles, especially the *sword*; and likewise visiting them with *pestilence* and those other chastisements, which are the usual tokens of God's speaking in wrath.

But chiefly will they be foiled in the attempt to extirpate Christianity. Many are not aware at present, that they are fighting against God in this matter. They do not purpose to deny either the Father or the Son; they are moved only by hostility to the prevalence of particular *forms* of christianity. But in their measures they are confederated with those who do not disguise their enmity to religion altogether; and these "evil communications will corrupt the good manners" of those who are not rooted or grounded in the faith, and lead them into a conviction, (at which many have arrived already,) that the fertile source of strife and animosity in the world, is the religion of *Christ*. Some will tolerate a sort of *Deism* or *natural religion* (as they call it;) but not the divinity, neither the priesthood and atonement of Christ. Others will become practically *Atheists*; not indeed in all instances actually denying God, (for many will maintain the "*form* of godliness;"^w) but in *works* they will deny him;^x and practically, by throwing him out of consideration in all their counsel, "say in their heart that there is no God."^y

v. 6. *Yet have I set my KING upon my holy hill of Zion.*

It has been observed, under the last two verses, that some will not endure the *priesthood* of Christ: the

verses now under consideration lead to the further inference, that there will likewise have grown up a special dislike to Christ's claim of *regal* power. For here he is called *king*; and the expression,—"*Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*,"—obliquely intimates to us, that there will be opposition to his royalty; but that in spite of the rage of men against him, he shall nevertheless be established as head over the Church in his Melchizedec character of King and Priest; for the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David;^a and he shall be manifested in glory as "*King of Salem*."

It is remarkable, that the hostility of "last day murmurers and complainers,"^b is especially directed against Christ in his two-fold character of *king and priest*; they hate all those, who as kings and priests on earth are types and representatives of his majesty, standing as *anointed*^c ones before him; "They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities,"^d but bring railing accusations against them; and as they act upon the principle in *religion*, that all men ought to be left to follow their own notions and opinions, and spurn the authority of the priesthood, so do they act upon the principle in *politics*, that the people are the only legitimate source of power, and that kings are but *their* ministers and servants. Thus they aim only to have those as rulers and ministers who will *comply* with this levelling and infidel principle, and over whom they can practically assert the sovereignty and majesty of the people, and thus become really the rulers and kings.*

In addition however to the as-

^v Luke xxi. 25. ^w 2 Tim. iii. 5. ^x Tit. i. 16. ^y Ps. xiv. 1; Luth. l. 1.
^a Luke i. 31. ^b Jude xvi. ^c Isa. xlv. 1; ^d Numb. iii. 3; 1 Sam. xxvi. 9; Zech. iv. 14. ^e 2 Pet. ii. 10; Jude 8.

* See this point well set forth by a writer on this Psalm in the Investigator, Vol. iv. p. 41.

surance, that God hath set (*in his counsel and purpose*) his king on Zion, the Lord further condescends to give us a *sign* :—

v. 7. *I will declare the decree. The Lord hath said to me,—Thou art my Son : this day have I begotten thee.*

It is worthy of remark, in the first place, that the decree and sign here given are made use of in different places of Scripture to assert the majesty of Christ in various points of view. Here the connexion is with his office as *King*. But in Hebrews v. 5, 6, it is expressly used to assert his *Priesthood* : “ So ‘ also Christ glorified not himself ‘ to be made an *high priest*; but ‘ he that said unto him, Thou ‘ art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” And in Heb. i. 5, his divine superiority over all creation is insisted on : “ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.”

But chiefly we are to notice the assurance and pledge contained in the words, that spite of the apostasy and evil counsel of men, they shall be made to know, “ that power belongeth unto God ;”^e and that “ the Lord shall be *king over all the earth* ; and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one ;”^f—that is, *one only form of government and worship*. God hath decreed this, and that it shall verily come to pass ; viz.—in that Christ has been proved “ and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”^g This passage—“ Thou art

my Son, this day have I begotten thee,”—is used by St. Paul in Acts xiii. 33, in reference to Christ’s *resurrection* ; shewing, that God’s having begotten him from the dead, (in Rev. i. 5 he is called “ the *first begotten of the dead*,”) is the pledge that he declares him to be his Son. More explicitly in Acts xvii. 31, he declares, that the resurrection of Christ was “ an *assurance* to all men,” that he is the person “ whom God hath ordained to judge the world in righteousness.” Notwithstanding, therefore, the apparently hopeless state of the Church, when the rulers of the world for a time appear to prevail against Christ ; and notwithstanding that the heathen or gentiles may again rage and take counsel against him, and seem to prosper ; we may cry with holy Peter : “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven† for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”^h

vv. 8, 9. The next two verses shew that the fulfilment at the resurrection of Christ was only incipient.—“ *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.*”

^e Ps. lxii. 11.

^f Zech. xiv. 9.

^g Rom. i. 4.

^h Pet. i. 3—5.

† The phrase “ reserved in heaven,” applied to the inheritance of the saints, evidently refers, if compared with other Scriptures, to the fact of Jesus being now seated at the right hand of God, in his resurrection *body* ; he being the *pattern* of what we are to be, and the pledge. For in 2 Cor. v. 1, the believer’s “ house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” is declared to be in verse 2 “ our house which is *from heaven*.” Moreover the new Jerusalem is said to “ come down from God *out of heaven*.”

The Lord did indeed begin, after his resurrection, "to visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name;"⁸ but the nations have never yet been made the possession of the Lord; and it is doubtful if the uttermost parts of the earth have ever yet even been visited with the gospel tidings. Still less were the gentiles dashed in pieces with a rod of iron in the days of the Apostles. The wrath of God fell upon the *Jews*, not upon the *Gentiles*: the Gentiles were on the contrary made the instruments of *inflicting judgment* on the Jews. The time spoken of in the Psalm, is evidently, from the exact similarity of language, that future period spoken of by Christ himself, after his resurrection from the dead: "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, (or *Gentiles**) and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: *even as I received from my Father.*"

Verses 10—12. The Psalm concludes with an exhortation to kings, rulers, magistrates, &c. to be warned in time:—

"Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

The exhortation in the last verse to kiss the Son, shews again that it is the *Christ*, against whom the rage of the wicked will principally be turned: and the admonition, that it is his *anger* that is to be feared, evinces, that the person called the Lord in verses 4, 5 (who sitteth in the

heavens, holds them in derision, and vexes them in his *wrath*;) is also the same Christ; and that he there sits expecting, till his enemies be made his "footstool."^h For not only will Christ be established in mount Zion, but "his redeemed also shall return with singing unto Zion,"ⁱ and shall be made "kings and priests unto God."^k

The blessedness finally declared of those, who at this time of wrath put their trust in him, confirms what has been said on verse 3 of the former Psalm, respecting the blessedness of the righteous, and which is so strikingly exemplified by Jeremiah *xvii. 7*. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots, &c."

PSALM III.

Verses 1, 2. *Lord how are they increased that trouble me? Many are they that rise up against me.*

The title of this Psalm gives us to understand, that it was composed by David "when he fled from Absalom his son." These titles are in many instances of doubtful authority; but the present one appears to be confirmed by the circumstance of there being no event in the life of David when such great numbers of enemies compassed him about. "How are they increased (he says) which trouble me!" and in the sixth verse he alludes to the "*myriads* (or *ten thousands*) of people that had set themselves against him round about." In the persecutions which he experienced from Saul, it was comparatively speaking but a small band of followers who came out against him; but the defection brought about by Absalom was most extensive and

⁸ Acts xv. 14.

^h Heb. x. 13.

ⁱ Isa. li. 2.

^k Rev. i. 6; v. 10.

* The English reader must bear in mind, that both from the Hebrew and the Greek the same word is indiscriminately translated *heathen*, *gentiles* and *nations*,

rapid : it being most surprising how suddenly men, who were previously to all appearance well affected towards David, and rendering to him and his government due *outward* homage, were nevertheless found, in the hour of sifting and trial, to be altogether *hollow*, and destitute of any sound principle which could bind them to God or to the king. Thus it is described, 2 Sam. xv. 12 —“ And the conspiracy was strong ; for *the people increased continually* with Absalom. And there came a messenger to David, saying, The *hearts* of the men of Israel are after Absalom.”

The circumstances in the history of this rebellion which may be presumed to have had an accomplishment at the first advent of Christ, are but slightly marked in the type. The facts which led to the rebellion appear without a parallel ; and all that can be said to bear any thing like a similitude is the ascent to mount Olivet with his attendants in humiliation and affliction ; which reminds us, that this was the place where Jesus, on his last visit to Jerusalem, went out to abide at night for fear of the Jews ;^a and where he experienced his agony and bloody sweat, and prayed that the cup he was about to drink might pass from him.^b There is also this farther circumstance, that the chief actor in this treason, who now lifted up his heel against David, was “ his own familiar friend,” being his son.^c The principal circumstance, however, to be regarded, in this and every other instance, is the *context* ; and this leads us to perceive that David was shielded during this defection from the hand of the enemy, (*vv.* 3, 5,) and obtained a triumph over him by destroying him : (*v.* 7 :) whereas the

Lord Jesus, though he triumphed over the grave, was nevertheless in the first instance brought under the stroke of death, and given up of God to be smitten for us.

I doubt not therefore, that the more complete accomplishment of this prophecy is to be looked for in that last apostasy, which will draw away so many of the professing “ *children of God*” into open rebellion or opposition to “ his king.” (Ps. 11. 6.) This we have every reason to apprehend will prove an extensive defection and a rapid one ; “ they shall rise up suddenly that shall bite thee.” Hab. 11. 7.

Having here quoted Habbakuk 11. 7, and many other similar places might be adduced, I would once for all observe, in the way of explanation ; that though the primary allusion in that passage is, as I apprehend, to the sudden rising up of the faction who shall be made the instruments of destroying the *Babylonish Harlot* ; whose overthrow is therefore described as coming upon her suddenly ;^d yet it must be remembered, that this is an *infidel* faction, which with equal rapidity proceeds to make war upon the Lamb ;^e and it may be shewn, that the principles, which first lead them to hate the whore and burn her with fire, are the same which ultimately lead them to turn their wrath against *true* religion,—though the kings and the cities (or *polities*,*) at *first* involved in the ruin, may nevertheless have a righteous judgment brought upon them.

The description of the principles which brought about the rebellion in David's time will be found to accord strikingly with what we may gather to be the character of the last apostasy. Here is a man near

^a Luke xxi. 37. ^b Matt. xxvi. 30—46. ^c Ps. xli. 9. ^d Jer. li. 8 ; Rev. xvii. 8—10. ^e Rev. xvii. 14.

* Compare Rev. xvi. 19 ; xviii. 9 ; and xix. 2.

and dear to the king, affecting nevertheless, for crafty purposes, a love of reform, and a spurious regard for the people, and "crouching and humbling himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones." For "it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand and took him and kissed him. And in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."g His defection is here concealed by a seeming concern for the honor of the king; and the next verses shew, that, with as base a dissimulation, he affects a zeal for religion; the very pretence for his withdrawing to Hebron, when his conspiracy was perfected, being, that he might pay a vow which he had vowed unto the Lord there.^h Yet had he war in his heart against his own father, being his lawful sovereign also, and against the majesty of God by whom kings reign. I fear we have too many counterparts of Absalom in the present day, who whilst they outwardly affect a reverence for the king, and a regard for the best interests of the church, are pursuing a course calculated to overthrow both, and humbling them-

selves before the people for purely ambitious purposes.

I shall now briefly dismiss the remainder of the Psalm.—

v. 2. *Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in his God.* SELAH.

It appears questionable here, from the words of the text, how far this proceeds from a spirit of *atheism*,—as if they questioned, if there were a God, that gave heed to his worshippers; we shall have abundant evidence hereafter of the existence of practical and avowed atheism, without labouring to force such a sense upon the words here. The more obvious meaning of them seems to be, that they took occasion, from the sudden declension of so many from the cause of David, to conclude that God had deserted him;—that this was an evidence, that his cause was not good; and that the Lord was now, as a judgment on his conduct, setting up a rival.

I doubt not, that where there is no sound *principle* of godliness in the heart, and men are held in their allegiance to God only by the force of custom, interest, hereditary prepossession, merely political considerations, or any other motive not connected with vital godliness, that such may, *in an instant*, when a time of great excitement and sifting comes, be drawn into the depths of open atheism or infidelity. But the *ordinary* evidence of the absence of this godly principle is—the constant tendency, as different events occur affecting the circumstances of the believer, to question the reality of that hope and confidence and experience of God on which he has avowedly laid great stress, and to hold it up to derision or contempt.*

v. 3. *But thou, O Lord, art a*

g 2 Sam. xv. 2—6.

h Ibid. 7.

* I take no notice in the exposition of the word *Selah*, feeling assured, from the

shield for me: my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

David here nevertheless encourages himself in his God: declaring that he looks to him as his *shield*, or sure protection;—as “*his glory*,” or him to whom he must ascribe the praise of all past deliverances, both temporal and spiritual, and shall again have to ascribe praise;—and as “*the lifter up of his head*,” which intimates that he was persuaded, that though the Lord suffered him to endure this humiliation, yet that he would nevertheless exalt him out of it and establish his throne. And thus will the Church be led to trust in God; and thus will it find the Lord a sure refuge and buckler, and have to glorify him for fresh deliverance.

vv. 4—6. *I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.* SELAH.

This verse shows however, that the Lord “will yet for this be *inquired of*,” and that the time of trial will be a period in which his people will be specially stirred up to *prayer*. Thus it is to them all in their individual capacity: for God most commonly causes his people to feel their dependance on him, before

he grants them a blessing; and it is considered by some, that, in this place, David is adverting to some *past* experience of the kind. I incline however to think that God had now given him some token for good in answer to his prayer, previous to the final accomplishment of his desires; and therefore it was that he could “*lay him down and sleep and wake again*,” with a sense of security, knowing “*that the Lord sustained him*,” notwithstanding the myriads risen up against him; and that “*he need not be afraid of ten thousands of people that had set themselves against him round about*.” v. 6, 7. For God is said to have heard him out of his *holy hill*, which refers to *mount Zion*, as we have seen in the previous Psalm. (v. 6.) For this is frequently called *God’s hill*, in which it pleased him to dwell; the temple in which he recorded his name, and promised to manifest himself to his waiting people, being there. And we know from the history in 2 Sam. xv. already adverted to, that David received encouraging news from Jerusalem, through the instrumentality of Zadoc and Abiathar, whom he had caused to return with the ark of God.

v. 7. *Arise O Lord; save me, O*

very ancient authority of the Greek or Septuagint version of the Psalms, which renders it always *Διαψαλμα*, that its use was to mark a change in the melody. It certainly often occurs when there is a remarkable change in the subject, or where there is a matter occurring highly worthy of note; but this I conceive accidental, or that it would be the case in *other* prophecies; and that it rather divides the poetical subjects into stanzas suitable for the musician. To those who are curious on the subject it may be observed, that it does not occur after the 89th Psalm, excepting in the 140th and 143rd. It occurs also in the Prayer (or rather Psalm) of Habakkuk contained in the last chapter of his prophecy. The most frequent divisions of the subject which it marks are in the following proportions. Short Psalms of eight verses are divided at the 2d, 4th, and 8th, or into two equal portions at the 4th; the word being often omitted at the 8th or last, where it is of course redundant, unless the measure were to be repeated. In some Psalms, in the English version it occurs at the 3rd, 5th, and 9th instead; or when *equally* divided, at the third and seventh, or fourth and ninth; but these Psalms do not generally correspond in their verses or proper divisions with the original, and may be considered as equivalent to Psalms of *eight* verses rather than of *seven* or *nine*. In the longer Psalms there is, in most instances, an evident regard to proportion maintained; being divided at the third parts, or into two equal parts; and sometimes the first half is subdivided into two equal parts, and sometimes the latter half.

my God : for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone ; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

This verse is of that mixed character so frequent in the prophets, in which the Spirit, when it gives assurance of some mercy to the Lord's people, speaks of it as already done. We here therefore may take most blessed encouragement, from the overthrow of David's enemies which followed, that when the Church shall come into the tribulation of the last days, though she may appear for a time deprived of her glory and abased, yet that she shall see her desire upon her enemies ; the Lord will arise, and " break the teeth of the young lions ;" and enable those that truly trust in him with their whole heart to cry—

" SALVATION belongeth unto the LORD : thy blessing is upon thy people." SELAH. v. 8.

PSALM IV.

This Psalm is so very similar in its character and allusions to the former, that little doubt can be entertained of its having been written on the same occasion.

v. 1. *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness ; thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress ; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

There is again an evidence here of the *spirit of prayer*, together with a decided reference to *former mercies*, which in times of distress had been experienced of the Lord, and now formed a ground of confidence in pleading with the Lord again. It shows the importance to the Christian of waiting upon God in prayer : for it is not only a means for the present of obtaining grace, but of establishing his faith also in God. Thus in another place the Psalmist

says, " I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications : because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live."

At the same time however the godly are duly sensible that the Lord is not favourable to their request on account of their *own* righteousness : and David's here addressing the Lord as the " God of his righteousness" evinces, that he looked to the Lord as the alone " Author and finisher of his faith." This is further evident in the next verse, where he again calls him his *Glory*, (Ps. 11. 3,) according as it is written—" He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."¹

vv. 2, 3, *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my Glory into shame ? how long will ye love vanity and seek after leasing ?* SELAH. *But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself : the Lord will hear when I call unto him.*

There is an obvious allusion here to the reproach mentioned in verse 2 of the former Psalm, that there was no help in his God ; and he indirectly declares the different characters and ends of the two parties. They were the men who sought after leasing or falsehood : he was still the man that was godly. And as they by deceit and false principles could only reap *vanity*, he on the other hand was persuaded that the Lord had yet set him apart for himself, and that He certainly would hear him when he called upon Him and avenge him on his enemies. So will the Lord rise up for his people in the evil day ; and just " when the wicked do spring as the grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."^m Well therefore will it be for those, who in the midst of the jarrings and contentions, and

¹ Jer. ix. 24 ; 1 Cor. i. 31 ; 2 Cor. x. 17.

^m Ps. xcii.

the war of passions and principles, and the raging of all the elements of strife and ungodliness that will mark the latter days, give heed in time to the admonition which follows:—

vv. 4, 5. Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. SELAH. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

Some will be purged by the fire of tribulation in that day, and “when the Lord’s judgments are abroad in the earth will learn righteousness.”ⁿ They will now examine and prove their ways before God; they will no longer rest in the *form* of godliness without the power, and bring forth only dead works; but they will become worshipers of God in spirit and in truth, and “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”^o

There is a useful admonition here also to the godly themselves, that they may not in these times of provocation and excitement be moved away from the hope of the gospel, but continue in the faith grounded and settled;^p and not be drawn by rashness of spirit, nor by party feelings, to do any thing contrary to the principles of Christ, but be *still*, putting their trust in the Lord, and being more than ever watchful to glorify God by sacrifices of righteousness.

vv. 6, 7. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

These “lovers of vanity” who seek after leasing, are like the godly in one respect,—they are seeking

happiness, and enquire after good; and as they suppose that a man’s life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,^q so do they put their trust in the “unrighteous Mammon” in order to obtain that abundance, and consider nothing an occasion of joy, unless it has a tendency to increase their present possessions, or to secure to them the enjoyment of them.

Godliness however is great gain even here; for it hath the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come.^r Therefore, to the question, Who will shew us any good? the Psalmist replies abruptly,—“Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.” The expression signifies with the Psalmist, in general, that favor of God which he shews toward the righteous, when, on the one hand, he shines into their hearts and enlightens them by his spiritual consolation and presence; and when, on the other hand, he interferes to deliver in time of temptation from the world the flesh or the devil. (Compare Psalm **xxi**, 6; **xlii**, 5, 11; **xliv**, 3; and **lxxxix**, 15.) That assurance, which David had of it in answer to his prayer, (already considered, Ps. **lii**, 5, 6; and repeated here in the next verse,—“*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety,*”)—had already given to him a greater sense of blessedness and quiet in his heart, than the best of merely worldly men can experience from the most abundant harvest, or the utmost increase of “their corn and wine” or any other possessions.

May the God of all consolation grant to his whole Church this peace of God which passeth understanding!

ABDIEL.

ⁿ Isa. **xxvi**. 9.

^o 1 Pet. **ii**. 5.

^p Col. **i**. 23.

^q Luke **xii**. 15.

^r 1 Tim. **iv**. 8; **vi**. 6.

INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

CHAPTERS II. AND III. CONTAINING "THE THINGS WHICH ARE."

Having considered the introduction, and the first of the three successive parts into which the whole book of the Apocalypse is primarily divided, namely, the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ manifested in his power, and in his various attributes, whereby he is qualified to bring succour to his afflicted church, and to avenge their cause upon their enemies, called "The things" which St. John had "seen," (chap. i. 10—20,) we pass on to the consideration of the *second* of these divisions, "*The things which are*," consisting of the Epistles to the seven Churches which are in 'Asia,' as contained in chapters II and III.

These epistles, it will be observed, are addressed to St. John immediately from the mouth of Christ himself, without the intervention of any angel or other glorified spirit. Such portions of prophecy are of rare occurrence, and of a very interesting character; as having reference, for the most part, to the severe trials of his Church, which call, as it were, for his own personal interference. The future vindication of their cause by the destruction of their worldly enemies, and the warning to be given them of that persecuting power that should arise out of their own bosom, may be communicated through an intermediate agency; but in reference to their actual sufferings he himself will speak the word of consolation and exhortation, accompanied by assurances of final reward to him who shall overcome. So in Dan. xii. 7, and Rev. x. 5—7, it is his own voice, and the awful sanction of his oath, which prescribes bounds beyond which the afflictions of his people shall not be protracted.

In these epistles the Church is exhibited to us in one of her most interesting states; viz. *in the fiery furnace of trial*. The wise husbandman, looking forward to the plenteousness of the harvest, delights to see the object of his culture, as soon as the seed has been well sown, subjected to the strengthening influence of the biting frosts, and the apparently adverse blasts of winter: and so our Lord was pleased, in bringing in many heirs of glory, to expose them from a very early period to the most dreadful persecutions; that by this means his power, in sustaining them against all the opposition of the world and of Satan, might be manifested; those who were truly his might be separated from false professors, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of himself. Who that is aware of the hardness and insensibility of his own heart would not desire to possess the fruits of such a culture? who that feels his weakness will not rejoice, that the appointment of all our times of sorrow and of joy are in the hands of Him, who will not lay upon his Church at large, or upon any member of it, more than he will enable them to bear. The exhortations, commendations, admonitions and rebukes, addressed to the Church in the body of each epistle teach us, that in seasons of trial we should search ourselves; and they are calculated also to afford lessons of the greatest utility applicable to all times and to all circumstances.

Intellectually considered, these epistles form a no less interesting and remarkable portion of the Apocalypse; we shall find that in each of them Christ reveals himself under

some one peculiar character ; either in his regal,—or in his priestly and prophetic,—or in his essential character as the WORD OF GOD ;—or, as he that watcheth over the churches to deliver them in the hour of adversity,—or as having power to reward with eternal life those whom he shall permit to suffer even unto death ;—or as he that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins ; and that worketh out the salvation of his Church ; being the way, the truth, and the life ; by whom alone we can have any knowledge of God the Father, or any access to him.

Each epistle will be found perfect and consistent with itself, as having one of the above mentioned subjects running through the three several parts of which it consists ; appearing equally in the revelation of Jesus Christ to that particular church with which it opens,—in the exhortation, rebuke or commendation bestowed upon it, which forms the body of the epistle,—and in the promise made by the Spirit to whomsoever shall overcome, with which each of them closes. And while thus perfect in itself, it is connected with the preceding portion of the book by the characteristic with which it opens, referring to that vision of Christ which St. John had seen ; and it is on the other hand connected with the subsequent portion of the book, “ The things which shall be hereafter,” by the promises of the peculiar future rewards which are made by the Spirit, at the close of each epistle, to those who should overcome. These are described in their fulfilment, and shewn to be bestowed on the glorified Church in heaven, in the last four chapters of the Apocalypse, XIX—XXII ; which treat of the last period in the history of “ the kingdoms of this world,” when it is said that they “ are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his

Christ,” and that the time is come that he should “ give reward” unto his servants the prophets, and to the saints ; and which also speak of the further rewards which they enjoy in the millennial and eternal states.

Thus wonderfully do we find “ The things which are” articulated into the general body of the prophecy ; and if we are justly called upon to admire the wisdom of God as manifested in the material world ; and with what divine skill, in the human body, each part is connected with the rest, so as to conduce together to effect the desired natural end : how shall we not with a yet higher admiration and interest observe the same wisdom displayed where the end to be effected is of a moral and intellectual nature. How extraordinary, that, with such strong ligatures connecting the several parts, commentators should have effected a dislocation. But this circumstance only gives fresh cause of admiration. For as some seeds, and a certain class of insects, have been found to retain the principles of life to the remotest periods in a quiescent state, until the expected circumstances call upon them to assume the exercise of their latent powers ; so the Apocalypse, not being intended to be fully revealed at once when first bestowed upon the Church, various methods, such as the peculiarity of its symbolical language, and the secrets of its structure, were employed to keep its powers suspended, and in a quiescent state, but yet preserve them unimpaired, until the important time should arrive that the circumstances of the Church should require its full developement, when it may be expected to burst forth in the novelty, the vigour, and the life of a new production.

But little is recorded in ecclesiastical history, respecting the state of these churches at the time the

Apocalypse was written, which can be made available for the illustration of the peculiar commendation or rebuke, which was addressed by Christ to each of them; and they have been so frequently referred to by divines for the moral lessons they supply, that little which is original of this nature would be either attainable, or is required.

Epistle to the Church of Ephesus.

CHAP. II. 1.

The first epistle is addressed to the presiding *angel*, (or principal minister, or bishop,) of the Church of Ephesus; which was the capital of Lydian Asia, in which district all the seven Churches were situated; and the nearest of them to the isle of Patmos, the scene of John's banishment. Christ admonishes the Ephesians, that the words about to be addressed to them came from the lips of him who peculiarly cares for and watches over his Churches and their ministers; and were therefore not only entitled to the deepest attention, but calculated to afford them the strongest consolation and support under the persecutions, to which during this period they were so frequently exposed. For it thus commences: "*These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.*" We are referred by these words to the introductory vision of the preceding chapter, and particularly to verses 12, 13; the scenery of which, as in other places of the Apocalypse, is borrowed from the service of the tabernacle or temple; and Christ is here manifested clothed in the priestly garment, like Aaron, or his sons, ministering in the holy place; which—situated between the holy of holies, the place of the immediate presence of God, and symbol of the Church in heaven, on the one hand, and the

outer court, or court of the Gentiles, emblematical of the merely outward and professing Church, on the other hand;—is itself an emblem of the true spiritual Church of Christ upon earth. This candlestick with its seven branches and lamps, supplied with the purest oil, by which alone the holy place was illuminated having no light from without, represented the Holy Spirit as the sole source of light and grace to the Church; in which signification it is also used, chap. iv. 5, where the Apostle sees seven lamps of fire "burning before the throne," which, it is said are, "the seven spirits of God." In the passage before us the symbol is not altogether the same: for seven distinct candlesticks are seen; in the midst of which Christ appears walking and tending them, to maintain their brilliancy and splendour; as it was the office of the priest to do in the tabernacle. And we find, in perfect accordance with the propriety of symbolical language, that a signification is here given to the seven candlesticks of a kindred nature; but yet somewhat differing from that given to the seven branches of the golden candlestick of the tabernacle, and to the seven lamps of Rev. iv. 5; both which latter represent the Spirit of God, sent forth into and illuminating the Churches. For the candlesticks represent not the Spirit of God which illuminates the Churches, but the seven Churches themselves. And as a want of system in the interpretation of symbolical language on the one hand, and an unintelligent hypercriticism on the other, may be considered as the two opposing errors which commentators are equally called upon to avoid: it will be useful to mark here the due latitude which it admits of, and to notice that in this present instance the radical symbolical idea set forth by a lamp burn-

ing with pure oil, is that of its being a source of spiritual light and grace; whence in the first instance it is referable to the Holy Spirit as being the only source of all spiritual illumination in the mind, and of all generous influences on the heart of man; but is again, by a slight variation, used to represent the churches themselves which the Holy Spirit illuminates, as being the appointed intermediate instruments for distributing that light and grace to others; and is again, in a subsequent part of the Apocalypse, used as a symbol for the written word, namely, the two books of the Old and New Testament, which, together with the preached word, are the means appointed by God for conveying in continual supplies these blessings to his Church, and which are therefore called, "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth,"—i. e. of the Churches of the earth; as the seven lamps are called "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"—i. e. into all the churches of the earth.

Analogous to the symbol of a candlestick, with its light; though more applicable to an individual, is that of a *star*, which when used in a spiritual signification, always means a minister of the gospel; for the stars, like the ministers of the gospel, are the appointed instruments for illuminating the darkness of this world. These are represented here as *seven* in number; a chosen and complete body, known of him, who, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit, gave some Apostles, some pastors, some teachers, for the building up of his Church, for the edifying of the body of Christ. These Christ holds in his right hand, as the instruments of his power, and as the objects of his peculiar care; given unto him by the Father, the chosen instruments for the establish-

ment and maintenance of his kingdom upon earth; whom none shall pluck out of his hand, or in any wise injure, so as to interfere with their work and appointed course, until the same shall have been fulfilled.

We notice, as one evidence of the peculiar consideration with which Christ regards the afflicted amongst his people, that he twice selects this peculiar characteristic, of his walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and having the seven stars in his right hand, from amongst all those under which he manifested himself in the introductory vision: viz, once in verse 20, chap. 1; where he selects it as the most worthy of note amongst the things which St. John had seen, and which he was directed to communicate to the Churches; and again in the verses under consideration, where it is the first characteristic under which they are addressed.

In like manner did Christ try his ancient Church at an early period of their experience, by the severity of a hard bondage, and a persecution which aimed at their destruction. Thus did he manifest himself as afflicted in all their afflictions, and as supporting them under all their trials, under the symbol (according to the usual view) of a bush burning with fire, but not consumed; and thus did he walk with his three faithful servants, to deliver them from death, in the burning fiery furnace; who had yielded up their bodies to the flames rather than apostatize from his worship.

It makes the selection of these characteristics also more remarkable, to observe, that they form an addition to those under which Christ exhibited himself to Daniel in the similar vision which introduces his last prophecy: they were then recently delivered from a captivity the

duration of which had been limited to a period of seventy years; and were no longer liable to suffer martyrdom for the truth. When the Apocalypse was given, the circumstances of the Church were different and more perilous; and a corresponding difference is made in the character under which Christ reveals himself to them.

Verse 2. Christ thus addresses this Church: "*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience; And how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars.*" Christ needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knoweth what is in man. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?" And he notices all our ways, that he may testify his disapprobation, or his approval; so that even so little as a cup of cold water, given for love to his name, shall not go unrewarded.

Three things our blessed Lord notices with approbation in the Ephesian Church, their unwearied labor, their invincible patience, and their discriminating zeal. The metaphors by which religion is set forth in Holy writ clearly declare that we cannot advance one step towards eternal life without great labour. To enter in at the strait gate we must not only seek, but strive; seeking will not suffice: we must put forth all our powers, as we should in a race, a wrestling, or a warfare; and then only can we hope to succeed in religion, when we engage in it with all our might. Moreover both men and devils will exert themselves to defeat our efforts; and we shall need all manner of patience to sustain their diversified assaults.

Now the Church of Ephesus had approved themselves well in these respects, and had *borne without fainting* all the afflictions which had been laid upon them.

Our Lord further mentions with approbation the care which the Ephesian Church had taken to examine the pretensions of those who assumed to themselves an apostolic authority; and the firmness with which they had withstood every effort that had been made to introduce among them either error in principle, or corruption in practice. In reading this commendation of the Ephesian Church, that they had rejected these false and lying apostles as they are called, (which were but stars wandering from the truth, and are contrasted with those which Christ held in his right hand,) it cannot fail to strike us, that if the mark of an apostle, which St. Paul speaks of, had been any external one; or if regularity of ordination alone could constitute them true ministers of Christ; the Ephesians had not been thus called upon to exercise their judgment, nor justified in thus trying them and rejecting their ministry. But if it be blasphemy to suppose that the power of the Holy Spirit, "the gift of God," can be purchased for money; it can scarcely be less so to suppose that the highest gift of Christ, the sacred office of the ministry, can be obtained by the power or will of man; or in any other way than by himself appointing to it. That it can be conferred in any other way, is not the doctrine of our truly evangelical Church; who requires that her candidates for the holy office should declare their belief that they are moved by the Holy Ghost to take it upon themselves. Our laws too repress the outward act of simony; but it was the doctrine, the thought of the heart, which, according to

the exposition of the apostle Paul, constituted the sin ; and the existence, to any extent, of such a doctrine in reference to the ministry, inconsistent as it is with the fundamental truths maintained by our Reformers, would shew, by an evidence that could not be brought against the Church of Ephesus, that we also had "*left our first love.*" May we listen to the exhortation subsequently addressed to them, and repent ; and in this, and in every other respect in which we may have declined from the truth, "*do our first works.*"

Verse 3. "And hast borne, and hast patience ; and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." We may here observe, that our Lord in mentioning with approbation the things which the Ephesian Church had done for his Name, appears to recur, again and again, to the same point ; as if he felt peculiar pleasure and delight in recording anything that was done for him. Hence we learn the marvellous condescension of our blessed Lord, as also the duty incumbent on all his followers not to dwell more than is absolutely necessary on the faults of others, but to prefer to dwell upon things of which they can approve.

Verse 4. This commendation had a powerful tendency to prepare them for reproof, when our Lord adds, "*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee.*" One would have thought that persons, so eminent in their outward conduct, could not merit any severe reproof ; but they had left their "*first love ;*" and this, in whomsoever it is found, is a tremendous evil. Some there are who regard a relaxation of their first love as a matter necessarily to be expected, and as a mark of growth, rather than of decay ; but in our text it is adduced as a ground of deep complaint, and as an evil that outweigh-

ed all that had been commended.

Verse 5. To this reproof our Lord mercifully vouchsafed to add his counsel, "*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen ; and repent, and do the first works.*" All such decay as this must be repented of. In order to see the evil and bitterness of such a state it is well to call to mind the love of our espousals, and to compare it with the formal services we now render to our God : yet will not repentance suffice, if it be not accompanied with a cordial return to all our former habits : if we would approve ourselves to God, we must "*do our first works,*" and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Our Lord in reference to the character in which he here manifests himself, as he who walketh amidst the seven golden candlesticks, not only to preserve them when faithful, but to correct and chasten them when their declension from him requires it ; thus warns them, "*or else 'I will come unto thee, quickly, and 'will remove thy candlestick out 'of his place except thou repent.'*" Having undervalued and abused the high privileges they enjoyed, these, unless repentance should avert it, should shortly, by a just judgment, be taken away from them ; so that they should no longer enjoy the communications of God's grace, or be the honored and happy instruments of communicating it to others. How constantly this case occurs, and how assuredly the declension is followed by the threatened punishment, there are but too many witnesses : and Ephesus stands prominent amongst them. When this chosen people, had so far departed from the truth, that there was not "*any green thing,*"—nothing flourishing under the influence of the heavenly dew, or grateful in the sight of God to be seen amongst them,—the commissioned sword of Mahomet laid it waste ;

the wild boar out of the wood trampled it under foot ; and her candlestick has been so entirely removed, that Ephesus, once the capital of Lydian Asia, and the site of one of the most flourishing Churches, planted by St. Paul, is now a ruined Mahometan village, without a single Christian inhabitant !

Verse 6. Our Lord again returns to commendation, as if judgment were his strange work, and approbation more grateful to him than even necessary rebuke : “ *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*” The tenets of the sect spoken of are not known with any certainty : they are supposed to have been of a licentious tendency, as the plurality of wives ; combining perhaps the profligacy of heathen manners with the profession of Christianity ; and to this supposition the text gives some countenance, which speaks of the hateful character of their deeds. St. Paul also, in giving directions to Timothy, as to the administration of the affairs of the Ephesian Church, and of the moral character to be required in those whom he should ordain its ministers, says, “ that a bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife.” He predicted also in his address to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, when taking leave of them for the last time, all these evils that should arise :—“ I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” This may be referred to the false apostles, the liars, who assaulted them from without ; whose attacks they had resisted, and whose ministry they had rejected. And when he adds, “ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them ;”—this may be referred to the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The

power of evil increasing as the love of Christ waxed cold, some amongst them were found ready to become its open advocates ; and were able to lead away many. Thus the Lord knoweth, not only the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly, which shall perish. He called not only on the eleven to rejoice that their names were written in heaven ; but knew, and revealed beforehand, the treachery of Judas ; of whom he said it had been good for that man if he had never been born ; and who, when he manifested his real character as a thief, and one loving the wages of unrighteousness, is spoken of as having gone “ to his own place.” Awful consideration ! yet, when surrounded with dangers, it is not the way of safety to shut our eyes, and to endeavour to become unconscious of them, but to look round if there be any refuge. The more we are conscious of the prevailing power of Satan in this world, the more shall we admire the power of him who hath overcome the world, and the prince of this world ; and the more shall we desire to be united to him in a perpetual covenant. Sweet then will those words be to our ears, “ *This thou hast that thou hatest that which I also hate :*” shewing how Christ desires that his Church should be one with him in mind and spirit. Thus David, not only a type of Christ the head, but an exemplar of what Christ in his members, the Church, should be ; and to whose spirit that of the Ephesian Church yet retained some resemblance ; thus appeals to God : “ Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ? and am not I grieved with those who (by ungodly speeches or hateful deeds) rise up against thee ?”

Verse 7. It is the office of the Holy Spirit not only to commence in the heart, but also to crown and

complete, the great work of human salvation. The promise of reward principally held out in the Apocalypse to the church militant on earth, as to be enjoyed in a future state, is that of the full participation of the influences of the Spirit of God; represented under the symbol of "living fountains of water," of which the wells, springing up into eternal life, are opened indeed in this world; but it is in the future life, the New Jerusalem, that it becomes the "pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb;" and unto which "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead his people." Therefore all the promises of reward in a future life, made to those of the seven churches who should have served God faithfully in this, are made by the voice of the Spirit. And so we find in chap. xiv. of the Apocalypse; after the labours of the Church in the latter days are described; a similar conclusion to that of these epistles is given in the following words, "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." In like manner every epistle addressed to the seven Churches begins with the declaration of Christ, "I know thy works;" shewing that Christ takes an account of their labours in his cause; and terminates with a promise, addressed to the Churches from the Spirit of God, of the exceeding great recompense of reward that awaits such labours in another world.—Should there be any one therefore, who, not being able to find sufficient rest and composure in the consideration of the goodness, mercy, and justice of God, and in the confidence that the God

of the whole earth must do right, thinks it necessary to limit in him the attribute of infinite and sovereign power; and who may perhaps have conceived an aversion to the subject of prophecy, because it displays that attribute, as well as all others, in its beauty and fulness, shewing that "known unto him from the beginning are all his works;" and apprehends perhaps an antinomian tendency in this doctrine; let such a one know, that there is not a more practical book in the whole Scriptures than the Apocalypse. The work and labour of love which Christ expects from his people in return for all that love wherewith he hath loved them, is the subject in part of every epistle; and in one, (that to the Church of Thyatira,) it is the leading subject of the whole: in the introduction to which Christ, as the head of the Church, and their great exemplar, manifests himself as *He that worketh* out the salvation of his people. It is impossible indeed to contemplate the subject of works, as set forth in the Apocalypse, without an awful feeling, that we of the professing Church fail greatly, from the unfruitfulness of our lives, in one of the leading features of the true Church of Christ.

But let us proceed to consider the peculiar promise made in this epistle to the faithful of all the Churches "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*" To him that overcometh, having renounced all for Christ's sake, when to confess his name rendered him liable even to death;—to him who should be supported through all trials by communion with Christ;—who should eschew evil, reject all heretical doctrines, by whomsoever brought or however subtle and plausible in their nature;—should maintain his first love, and delight to labour to

the end in his cause ;—to such a one it is promised that he shall receive a reward in a future life, which is represented under the figure of eating of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the new Jerusalem ; growing on either side of the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb ; (Rev. xxii. 1, 2,) or, as it is here expressed, “ *growing in the midst of the Paradise of God.*” We must first trace the connexion of this peculiar promise with the character of Christ, as walking amidst the candlesticks and holding the seven stars in his right hand, or as bestowing upon his Church on earth the privileges of the means of grace and the ordinances of his house ; and we shall see, that the tree of life is here set forth to us as a type, or symbol, of the means whereby we are to enjoy the gift of eternal life in Christ through the influence of the Spirit of God. Or, if any thing approaching to the use of means is to be considered as inconsistent with the perfection of the future state ; then, under the figure of an appointed means, towards the attainment of an end, the end itself is implied ; in either way the enjoyment of communion with God, and life received and sustained in Christ through the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, is the subject of the promise. This participation in spiritual blessings is frequently set forth under the symbol of food. When the elders went up and saw the glory of Christ in mount Sinai, an emblem of the future manifestation of his glory, it is said that “ they did eat and drink.” Our Lord also sanctions the figure of

eating bread in the kingdom of heaven ; and used the same figure when he said to his disciples at the last supper—“ Verily I say unto you I ‘ will drink no more of the fruit of ‘ the vine until that day that I drink ‘ it new in the kingdom of God.” The institution of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper itself speaks also the same language, and they all imply that we are to derive our life, strength, and support from Christ : through the communications of the Holy Spirit.*

Observe, lastly, the honor which is put by the conclusion of this epistle upon the ordinances of God’s house, and the services of his ministers. They are not accidental and human institutions, which may be dispensed with ; but the means of grace appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and over which he himself presides, answering to the “ tree of life,” which to our first parents in the paradisaical state was the appointed means of grace, calculated to be to them the continued support of a never-ending life.

Epistle to the Church in Smyrna.

Verse 8. The next epistle is addressed to *the Church in Smyrna*, which, after Ephesus, was the largest city in the Proconsular Asia. To whom Christ reveals himself as “ *the first and the last ; which was dead, and is alive.*” which words refer, in the manner usual in these epistles, to the declaration made by him to St. John in the vision of the preceding chapter, (vv. 11 and 18,) “ I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.”—And again, “ I am he ‘ that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore ; and

* As the connexion of the Scripture just quoted has been thought by some to refer to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, we take the opportunity of observing, that there appears one insuperable objection to such a view : viz, that Christ speaks of the time when he *himself* will drink it in the kingdom of God, with his disciples : but we cannot suppose that he spiritually drinks his own blood.—Ed.

' have the keys of hell and of death.'

A higher degree of suffering is contemplated in the case of this church than in that of Ephesus, and by this revelation of the power of Christ they are fortified against the utmost fury which could be exercised against them; being assured, that while their adversaries could, at the most, but destroy the body, they had the support of Him who is almighty, and who had evidenced this in that he had laid down his own life, and taken it up again; who now ever liveth to save; whom the invisible world obeys; and at whose word death and hell, or Hades, shall ever be constrained to deliver up their victims. Christ here encourages them by his own example; shewing, that as he had suffered death from the hand of his enemies, but it was impossible that he should be holden of it; so they, if called upon to drink even of that cup of which he had thus drunk, should also be partakers of his lasting triumph, over whom death hath no more dominion.

Verse 9. This church is commended for what they had endured for Christ's sake, and assured that he *knows*, or takes account of, their "*works, and tribulation, and poverty*;" but that though poor as to external circumstances they were "*rich*," having the promise that he who should lose his life for his sake and the gospel's should save it; and that there was no man who had thus resigned houses, relatives, or lands, but should receive an hundred-fold in this present world, and in the world to come eternal life: nor, as the apostle declares, hath eye seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; though they are revealed by the Spirit, and are set forth in the Apocalypse particular-

ly under the emblems of "gold," "pearls," and "precious stones," or an assemblage of everything that the imagination can conceive that is most splendid and costly in reference to worldly *riches*.

Christ also assures them that he notices the *blasphemous* reproaches of those which said they were Jews, and were not; boasting we may suppose of their superiority and high privileges as the descendants of Abraham. Being however entirely ignorant of the grace of Christ and of the spiritual nature of his Church, in thus speaking against his humble and despised people and the simple truths which they maintained, they were but the prototypes of those who are represented during the proud papal times, as opening their mouth "in *blasphemy* against God, to '*blaspheme* his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven," and they thus proved themselves to be truly of "*the synagogue of Satan*."

These opposers of the truth from amongst the Jewish nation, to whom might be applied the declaration of St. Paul, "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly," were from the first the most zealous persecutors of the Christians, and it is recorded in the account given of the martyrdom of Polycarp, (who was a disciple of St. John, and was, as is supposed, the angel or bishop of this church to whom the epistle was addressed,) that they distinguished themselves on that occasion by cruelly exciting the rage of the heathen against him.

Verse 10. The church in Smyrna is next exhorted by our Lord not to be discouraged at the extremity of trial which should befall them, or to *fear none of those things which they should suffer*; and that they might not be offended when they should experience them in all their severity, they are here forewarned that *the*

devil should cast some of them into prison that they might be tried, as gold is tried in the fire. All such trials are said to be the work of *Satan*, as was manifested in the case of Job; but the Pagan persecutions of the Christians, for refusing to sacrifice or offer incense to their idols, are represented in the Apocalypse, as peculiarly his work, he being himself the object of pagan worship. St. Paul says, the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto devils: therefore in Rev. xii. where the Roman empire is described under the influence of Paganism, the seven heads and ten horns are exhibited in connexion with, and under the controul of that old serpent, called the devil and Satan; who is there represented as employing every device for the destruction of the Church both in time and in eternity. But as our Lord assured his disciples, that not a hair of their head should perish, so he here makes himself known to his church as the refiner who sitteth over the fire to moderate its heat; and he lets them know that there is a limit, prescribed by himself, to the duration of their *tribulations*; for that these should be continued only to the close of "*ten days*," or distinct periods, referring we may suppose under this term to the ten pagan persecutions, then already commenced; or otherwise to that carried on under the emperor Dioclesian, which continued for ten years; and respecting which Milner observes, that "both in the East and the West *Satan* was permitted to exert his malice in the keenest manner, during this last of the Pagan persecutions." They had however the confidence given to them, that when these should have been endured, the same almighty power and goodness which cast them into the furnace would bring them relief; and are animated by the promise,

made by Him who had revealed himself both to St. John and to this particular church, as "he which was dead and is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death," that he would give to every one who should be found "*faithful unto death*" the unfading "*crown of*" everlasting "*life*."

It was the prospect of this recompense that encouraged St. Paul under his sufferings and labours; so that at the close of them he thus speaks of himself: "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a *crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 8.) In another passage St. Paul terms it "*an incorruptible crown*." (1 Cor. ix. 25.) St. Peter describes it as "*a crown of glory*, that fadeth not away;" (1 Pet. v. 4.) and St. James calls it "*the crown of life* which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James i. 12.)—It is also here denominated "*the crown of life*," in reference to the character in which, as above stated, Christ had manifested himself to St. John, and under which also he had addressed this particular Church. (Chap. i. 18; ii. 8.)

In the two important characters in which Christ revealed himself respectively to the Churches of Smyrna and of Ephesus,—viz. as giving to his people the crown of life, and as holding the stars in his right hand,—we have, in symbolical language, the two consolatory declarations which are introduced in like connection with each other in the gospel of the same beloved Apostle St. John, where Christ says,

"I give unto my sheep eternal life;—neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (Chap. x. 8.)

Verse 11. The concluding promise here made by *the Spirit to the Churches*, to which all are invited to *hearken who are possessed of any spiritual faculties or discernment*, is, that he who shall so *overcome* and be faithful unto death should "*not be hurt of the second death.*" The second, and by far the most dreadful, death is the eternal death of the soul; it was that which passed upon Adam and all his posterity, according to the righteous decree pronounced against him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" from which there is no deliverance but by the power of the second Adam, who is the Prince of life. For as death was immediately communicated by the transgression of the one, so is life by the righteousness of the other; as it is said—He that believeth shall not see death, but is passed from death unto life. "The second death," or everlasting destruction, is again mentioned in the description of the judgment, Rev. xx. 14, 15, where it is said that "death and hell were cast 'into the lake of fire; *this is the second death*; and whosoever was not 'found written in the book of life, 'was cast into the lake of fire."

The faithful are not only here promised an exemption from this dreadful condemnation of the wicked; but, further, that according to the fundamental law upon which Christ established his kingdom, they, having suffered with him, should also reign with him. And as he encouraged the apostles saying, "I appoint unto 'you a kingdom, as my Father hath 'appointed unto me; that ye may 'eat and drink at my table, in my 'kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" so it is promised to the faithful of the

Church in Smyrna, that they in like manner should be employed in administering that theocracy, under which the whole world will be placed during its last blessed and happy period. The fulfilment of which to the martyred saints is shown chap. xx. 4—6:—"I saw thrones and 'they sat upon them, and judgment 'was given unto them; and I saw 'the souls of them that were be-'headed for the witness of Jesus, 'and for the word of God; (these words referring to those to whom the promise was first made, who had been slain by pagan persecution,) 'and which had not worshipped the 'beast, neither his image, neither 'had received his mark upon their 'foreheads, or in their hands; (these words referring to the second class of martyrs, those who had been slain by papal persecution,) "and they 'lived and reigned with Christ a 'thousand years. Blessed and holy 'is he that hath part in the first 'surrection, on such the *second death* 'hath no power; but they shall be 'priests of God and of Christ, and 'shall reign with him a thousand 'years." For though the first resurrection, and the millennial reign are not specified in the epistle to the church in Smyrna, the promise of these is virtually included in the single expression, "*he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death,*" this being only employed on account of its peculiar appropriateness to the character in which Christ reveals himself to the Church, as "he that was dead and is alive;" whilst it necessarily implies the possession of the other privileges with which in chap. xx. 4—6 it stands connected.

Let us learn then, from the great recompense of reward set before the faithful by Christ in this epistle, not to fear any thing we may be called upon to suffer for his sake; but to rejoice if (in the times of raging infi-

delity, on the one hand, and the manifest, but not sufficiently acknowledged infliction of his judgments, upon the other,) we should be permitted to testify more openly for him. And with respect to any minor afflictions which may affect the Church in their individual capacity, let every one be assured that he who is "the first and the last," who sees the end from the beginning, has himself fixed bounds to their duration, and prescribed their numbers: although he may not have revealed it to us, as he did their approaching sorrows to the church of Smyrna.

I would also make one observation of a merely technical nature, relating to the proper mode of investigating the Apocalypse, but yet important as being calculated to encourage us in our progress; namely, how a correct view of its general system and outline solves at once many, or, I might well say, *all* minor questions; and how much more profitable it is to endeavour to get a correct view of it as a whole, than to consider only detached portions. For instance, were it otherwise possible, (as has been contended) to interpret the first resurrection and the reign of the saints upon earth, as a figurative description only of a revival, in the future generations who shall live upon the earth during the millennial period, of the same spirit of devotion which animated the primitive martyrs; the impossibility of putting such a gloss upon the text would become apparent, when we should find that the first resurrection is promised as the special reward of those who should suffer martyrdom during the ten periods of pagan persecution; and that it was with the prospect of this that they were animated to persevere in their course, and to

overcome in the contest; and it cannot for a moment be doubted, but that the reward set forth as actually bestowed at the conclusion of the Apocalypse, is given to those individuals to whom at its commencement we find that it was thus promised: and we shall then perhaps also learn to distinguish (which, alas! neither party of the disputants upon this subject appears yet to have been able to do,) between the successive generations living upon earth who shall partake of the blessings conferred by Christ's reign, on the one hand; and the risen and glorified saints (represented by the Cherubim in the holy of holies, during the Jewish theocracy,) on the other; by whose instrumentality our Lord, in recompense for their faithfulness and sufferings in his cause, will be pleased to administer it,—perhaps in some more open and glorious manner than we are as yet qualified rightly to understand or to appreciate.

Upon the whole we have obtained from a consideration of this epistle a confirmation of all that we have learnt from that which preceded it, as to the peculiar sympathy of Christ with his afflicted people, and of the manner in which he adapts the degree of support given them to the exigency of their circumstances; together with the strong motives which are held forth for diligence and faithfulness in his service; and also of the close connexion which exists between the different parts of the Apocalypse, and the abundance of their mutual references; which may be considered as forming so many strong barriers erected in every part to prevent our straying from the right course in following out our interpretation.

JAS. H. FRERE.

SATAN BECOME AN ANGEL OF LIGHT; OR DEVICES OF THE LAST DAYS.

No. II.

In my last paper I endeavoured to set forth the mischievous consequences of that unbridled liberty of uttering opinions—more especially of *printed* opinions—which is so warmly contended for in the present day; and to shew, that the falsely called *liberal* spirit which has given rise to it is really a spirit from beneath;—that it is nothing more than “*Satan* become an angel of light” who is the means of this unrestricted circulation of whatsoever is infidel, blasphemous, and seditious,—thus helping forward, with a fearful rapidity, the great crisis of apostasy.

If there be truth, in what I stated in the outset, respecting the influential character of opinions on society, it follows, that, by whatsoever means the sentiments and principles of action in mankind can be deteriorated, Satan must thereby derive no small advantage. The great source of what is good and healthful in these springs of action is *divine revelation*. This is the sun, which in the absence of its great author, concentrates and then radiates his heavenly glory, and thus proves the means of giving light to the world. And the source of all evil is that wisdom from beneath, which, however it may vary its aspect and become refined and subtilized by human reason and science, is really nothing more than an exhalation from the bottomless pit;—it is the prince of darkness putting his darkness for light, and bitter for sweet, and calling evil good and good evil.

It is obvious then, that another very evident mode of effecting the prevalence of false principles, is to *obscure the* LIGHT. If we could

remove the sun from the firmament of heaven at noon day, or prevent the transmission of its rays to the earth, we should as effectually involve the world in darkness, as if we waited for the period of midnight; and the devices therefore of Satan, to which I would next draw the attention of the Reader, are those which he is now practising for the accomplishment of this end.

It will serve to make more clearly manifest the importance to Satan's kingdom of darkening the light, if we only glance for a moment at the past history of the Church, and notice how the wily adversary has continually aimed at it. Under the Jewish dispensation he succeeded, by various means, in effectually withdrawing the Scriptures of God from observation; and when in the days of king Josiah a copy of it was accidentally discovered among the neglected rubbish and lumber of the temple, the effect of that discovery was like the sudden illumination of the heavens by lightning in the midst of the darkness of the tempest, revealing to men the horrors of their situation, into which they had fallen by a departure from the truth of God. We find the Jews of a later period, though having only the form of godliness, yet possessing a great *outward* reverence for the word of God, and becoming exceedingly scrupulous as conservators of the *letter* of the Scriptures; so that every letter of it was indeed counted, and every jot and tittle of it held in apparent reverence; and with passages of it they even bordered the hem of their garments and made phylacteries for their foreheads. But

Satan nevertheless contrived effectually to undermine its power and supersede its authority, by leading men in a spirit of self-righteousness to venerate their own moral and religious inventions, and by the introduction of a heap of traditions and superstitious observances to overcloud and obscure that very light which they held in their hands.

And how did the Christian Church afterwards fare, when, in addition to the radiance cast upon it by the Old Testament Scriptures, its light was increased as it were seven-fold, by the appearance of the Sun of righteousness himself, and by the records which his inspired apostles have transmitted of his doctrine and life? Alas! Satan again prevailed. Various circumstances, quickly led on to the obscuring and eclipsing of that light;—the darkness of superstition again overspread the ecclesiastical firmament; and the Scriptures were once more effectually withdrawn from the observation and knowledge of mankind, until a discovery of them was again made by Martin Luther, and the world was once more astonished and dazzled with the splendour of its beams.

May we conclude, then, that as the sun arose once more at the Protestant Reformation on a benighted world, that darkness will no more overtake it?—By no means: as it is from that period that we have had to date the open avowal of those *infidel* principles which now are permitted so unblushingly and exultingly to stalk abroad; so likewise have the efforts of Satan been equally determined and incessant towards effecting the withdrawal of the positive light and truth. But the circumstances of the age have required that his proceedings should be more masked and subtle; and he has consequently acted with much plausibility, and strictly in accordance with

his character as an Angel of Light. He has indeed aimed in the first instance at the extinction of the truth by open persecution; in like manner as, in the primitive age of christianity, he strove to extirpate it by a blow. But this circumstance enables him the more effectually to conceal his present mode of proceeding; for unreflecting persons are not wont to suspect him, whom they have known as a persecutor, to be attacking the truths of christianity by affecting to be a professor and admirer of it; and that by means of many who appear to be good men even, but who are ignorant of his devices, he is advancing his designs.

To proceed then to those devices; for a considerable period there has been growing among professors of Christianity various principles of interpreting or of applying Scripture; by which the force of divine truth is in the first instance weakened and obscured, and then practically got rid of. Perhaps nothing tended more to lead on to the period of Popish darkness, than that vicious method of allegorizing Scripture first patronized by Origen. Affecting to fetch out of the Scriptures more light than they appeared to reflect on godly persons of sober and ordinary talents, they really left all Scripture to be interpreted according to men's fancy; and the plain and literal meaning, which is generally speaking the true light shining, was neglected; and not only so, but that which was called *light* now rested upon the uncertain basis of man's imaginative powers, which varied in different expositors, and thus led many to begin to question whether the Scriptures *could* be in all things a sure guide, since their real meaning could not be depended on. In this manner the authority of God's word insensibly lost its hold upon mens' consciences: it ex-

isted in name, but was virtually superseded. Now the *spiritualizing* system (as it is called) which has more recently sprung up, leads practically to the same result as the *allegorizing* of Origen: it is in fact the same thing, only somewhat more volatilized, in order to accommodate itself better to the spurious refinement and vitiated taste, which has grown up in religious professors.

But there are other modes likewise of casting upon certain portions of God's word a measure of uncertainty sufficient to neutralize its counsel, so far as to deprive it of its practical utility, and thus to render it no longer a light to those who thus trifle with it. A pernicious hypercriticism is one means. It is almost impossible to press upon a certain class of religionists a text of Scripture, calculated in its obvious sense to convince them, but they immediately fly to the Greek to see if they cannot find some possible meaning which may be affixed to a preposition or a particle; or to the Hebrew, to see if they cannot by means of the vowel points give a different turn to the passage; and thus cast a doubt on its intended signification in that place, and deprive their adversary of its use. In like manner some will insist, that the *Old Testament* has no force or application under the Christian dispensation; that it is a mere shadow which belonged to them that were under the Law, but which has passed away as regards believers under the Gospel. And of the *New Testament*, they can make out that as much of the preceptive and doctrinal parts of the four Gospels, as do not please them, were spoken to the *Jews*, and were never intended for the *Gentiles*; and of the *Epistles*, that some were directed exclusively to the *Jews*, and others were for the use of particular Churches

only, and that however therefore the things contained in them may apply to the local circumstances of the respective parties, they have not any general application to the Church at large. By such methods may the authority of the whole word of God be indirectly got rid of, and its light virtually put out.

But Satan likewise still proceeds to work upon the *fears* of men, and to *deter* them altogether from exhibiting the light in circumstances in which it is most useful and necessary; and as, on the one hand, he "*opens* his mouth in blasphemy against God," (Rev. XIII. 6,) so on the other hand will he if possible *shut* the mouth of piety and of deference towards God. It may seem paradoxical, that those who contend for a free course for *all* opinions, should yet except from this act of general toleration those opinions alone which are most proper to be uttered: yet so it is; and nothing can more decidedly betray the Satanic origin of this misnamed *liberality*. What infidel and blasphemous things have been and are continually uttered in the great council of this nation!—And yet, if any endeavour to base a measure upon a *religious* principle, or to remind the house of their obligations and responsibility to God, either some member rises and with great solemnity deprecates the introduction of religion in that place, and sits down amid the approving "*hear hear*" of the majority; or the more unceremonious method is resorted to of coughing it down, or scouting it with "*Oh, Oh,*" or some other obstreperous means of interruption.

It will at once be seen from whence comes the principle, *that religion has nothing to do with politics*. It is nothing more than an ungodly endeavour on the part of some to effect that indirectly, which they have not yet ventured to do openly.

—viz. insist that religion is nothing more than a speculative and unprofitable theory, and ought to have no practical influence on men in their ordinary duties ;—that in fact men are independent of God in their political relation to each other. For what can really be a greater absurdity and contradiction, than to profess, on the one hand, that men in the first place owe deference and obedience to God in their private and individual character ; but that the moment they combine together in a public character, there is something in that act alone which releases them from their obligations to Him, and that they are then at liberty to act on different principles. Well we know that there is no middle principle.—If it is not from heaven, it is from hell, however it may be called *of men*.—"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, *devilish*." (Jas. III. 15.) The diabolical effect of it is to deprive men in their public proceedings of that light which can alone guide them to prosperity and safety and be as a wall of defence to them : and if in their public, so ultimately it will be found that they are equally defenceless in their more private capacity ; for domestic habits, manners and opinions notoriously receive an influence and derive a character from political institutions. And what is more awful to consider, such public apostasy provokes the Lord to give men up to their own imaginations and to punish them by means of the sparks of their own kindling ; even whilst the light of his Gospel is still abroad. "Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us ; we wait for

light, but behold obscurity ; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes : we stumble at noon day, as in the night ; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves ; we look for judgment, but there is none ; for salvation, but it is far from us." (Isa. LIX. 9—11.)

The principle of excluding religion has not confined itself to the *Senate*. As has just before been observed, what becomes a principle in politics, will necessarily give a tinge to institutions of a more private character. If we examine the laws of the generality of *Clubs*, and of *Mechanics' Institutes* (I believe universally,) they proceed upon the principle of banishing religion, which is commonly excepted against by some express law. Again, there are but few *Subscription Libraries* in England, which do not, by some fundamental rule, forbid the introduction of religious works. The principle on which the *London University* has been established, is a covert design of Satan systematically to exclude religion from *education* ; and thus instead of training up the rising generation in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to leave the youthful heart, with all its natural propensities to evil and its indisposition to holiness, to wander about to seek religion elsewhere if it pleases, or to neglect it altogether if it would rather.*

It is grievous to perceive how ministers of the Gospel, who ought not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, are nevertheless in many instances deluded by him in this matter, and

* I know it may be said, that this proceeds from no intention or desire to exclude religion, but from the differences of opinion which must exist among Dissenters on that momentous subject. I grant that *ostensibly* this is true ; but it serves to betray the *immense evil of dissent*, and how easily it precipitates men into that dangerous snare of Satan which I am now endeavouring to expose.

deterred from lifting up their voices and warning their people of the coming sword, lest they should have the reproach cast upon them of meddling with politics. This "angel of light" captivates indeed the minds of many virtuous persons, by setting before them a specious *beau ideal* of the ministerial character. He is tenderly alive for their reputation and usefulness, and dreadfully alarmed lest they should overstep in any way that decorum which he has himself prescribed to them. Let it indeed be some *Socinian* minister, or some noisy radical of any denomination, and he may spout away upon politics with full liberty, and earn golden opinions from the multitude. But let it be some minister who warns them of the ungodliness and danger of any of their political notions, and he is dismissed with the reprimand, that he should keep to his own province;—that he may preach the Gospel, but has nothing to do with politics;—and that he is only moved by some interested motive when he does interfere. It is undoubtedly desirable that the ministers of Christ should study not to be meddling on every occasion, nor to act the part of political agents and underlings; and that they should make some sacrifices even to avoid the appearance, at times, of being under the influence of interested motives. But they are equally bound, in numerous other instances, to lift up their voice and to warn men in general of the awful tendency of political sentiments and maxims which are nothing less than the offspring of infidelity, and lead to apostasy and perdition.

There still remains to notice one other device of Satan whereby he endeavours to quench the light, and that is—by endeavouring to *abstract* from it the most conspicuous and important doctrines. And this he

does by seducing religious professors into circumstances and situations whereby they become compromised, and are under a sort of compact to keep certain doctrines out of sight. If the London University system of education necessarily excludes religion altogether, the *Irish Education System* proceeds upon the principle of withholding *portions* of important truth, in deference to the *prejudices* (as they are called) of men who were till recently in most public acts denounced as heretics and idolaters. The union of *The Three Denominations* "for *political* purposes" has led to similar fruits during their communion with each other; and serves to illustrate, how impossible it is for men to separate politics from religion without being previously blinded by Satan. The only *common* ground on which men can proceed, who hold opinions so diametrically opposed as calvinistic Trinitarians and Socinians, is by that merging of the fundamental principles of the former, which brings them down in reality to the standard and level of the more plausible of the latter, and makes them therefore *practically* Socinian. It is not sufficiently considered in the present day, what Socinianism—or, as it is more fashionably termed, *Unitarianism*—is. It can get on very well without the avowal of its own peculiar dogmas, if you will only allow it to pluck out and to place under the bushel, that which forms the life and power of vital christianity. It may not be *positive* Unitarianism, but it is *negative* Unitarianism; and it is almost as mischievous in the long run, from being unsuspected, and thus throwing persons off their guard, and leading them to imagine that they are viewing matters in the light of the Gospel, when it is not so. If we could abstract entirely from the light of day

one of its constituent portions, as seen when separated by the prism, and which, when they are all blended together produce that harmonious and beautiful element by which we are enabled to discern objects in their real character, it would no longer be that which we are accustomed to recognise as the light of heaven, but it would cast upon every object a different hue. And so it is in regard to the revelation of God. Men may preach what is in the Scriptures, but that which they preach in the general is not the Gospel, unless they actually set before their hearers "the whole counsel of God." If they shun to declare this,—whether it be precept, or promise, or doctrine they keep back,—it destroys the harmony of God's revelation; it communicates a different tinge, as a whole, to that which they do bring forward; and may lead men to commit very serious errors themselves, and to prove great stumbling blocks to others. But how much more must this be the case, when those doctrines are kept in the back ground which are its principal features; and without which we are after all walking by the glimmering of twilight only, instead of, by the light of day! The principle upon which union in the *British and Foreign Bible Society* is maintained appears culpable in this point of view. Some parties merge little or nothing by coming forward and desecrating on what they call the *common ground* of Christianity; but those who cannot, or who ought not, to open their mouths but to exalt the Saviour, must be compromised;—there must be an understanding, tacit indeed but implied, not to get upon topics notoriously offensive to those with whom they coalesce; unless indeed they will be deliberately guilty of inviting the co-operation of certain denominations,

only to annoy and to insult them.

I will close these observations by expressing my own unfeigned concern, that there should be frequent instances to be met with of *ministers* who possess sufficient evangelical light to understand most of the important doctrines of the Gospel, and who are aware of the vast importance of bringing them forward, who nevertheless are guilty of suppressing or obscuring them. Their delusion is singular: they could not excuse it to their conscience to *deny* any truth,—yea not to *preach* truth: but they are afraid of having that truth discerned and understood. They know "that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" and that there is an enmity in the carnal heart which is likely to be called forth when they are pressed home: the object therefore is to make such an exhibition of divine truth as shall not offend or startle the natural man. Books are written, and sermons are preached, in which essential doctrines, if not kept back, are nevertheless so couched in vague or obscure terms, that their real point and force are never discerned: the worldly reader may gape over them, and the self-righteous hearer may vacantly listen, yet never discover, from any light thrown upon surrounding objects, that he is brought within the radiance of an excellent glory; and because no *offence* is given, it is boasted of as an exceedingly "*judicious statement.*"

Such are some of the devices of "Satan transformed into an angel of light." May the children of God have grace to discern him through every plausible disguise! and in proportion as he would himself either hinder the Gospel or utter pernicious falsehoods, may they "*shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life!*" (Phil. ii. 15.)

BETA.

Review of Books.

(4) *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and other Sects, by the Rev. JOSEPH WOLFF, during his travels between the years 1831 and 1834 from Malta to Egypt, Constantinople, Armenia, Persia, Khorossaun, Toorkestaun, Bokhara, Balkh, Cabool in Affghanistaun, the Himmalayah Mountains, Cashmeer, Hindoostaun, the Coast of Abyssinia, and Yemen.*

Lond. Nisbet, 1835, 8vo. pp. 540. 2d Edit.

We peruse the Journals of Mr. Wolff with a peculiar interest. No individual has perhaps given greater publicity to the doctrine of the *Second Coming* of the Lord Jesus Christ, than has this well known Missionary to the world. Wheresoever he goes, he proclaims the approaching advent of the Messiah in glory, together with various other circumstances of the prophetic word, which he conceives will be the accompaniments or the immediate precursors of the day of God. But whilst those, who are led "to wait for his Son from heaven," must rejoice when the attention of their fellow mortals is drawn toward "that blessed hope," they will at the same time be solicitous, that the doctrine should be set forth in a manner consistent with the whole of divine revelation, and with the general interests of the kingdom of God: and we confess, that we not only have experienced a degree of nervous apprehension on this head, as we have followed this remarkable individual through his extraordinary course; but we have likewise felt that, in some instances, he has done harm to the cause he advocates, rather than good, first by unjustifiable, and secondly by imperfect statements.

We are truly glad however to perceive, in the volume now before us, evidence that the judgement of Mr. Wolff *improves* as he grows in Christian experience, and that he walks with more of "the meekness of wisdom." In some points he has already modified his opinions; and in regard to others, he manifests such candour and teachableness towards those who remonstrate with him, that we quite expect to see a visible amelioration with every fresh journal he may publish. We were gratified to learn, previous to his volume making its appearance, that notwithstanding early intimacies and associations, he had been preserved in his simplicity free from the Irvingite delusions; and that on his recent visit to England he had most earnestly and affectionately, but very faithfully, exhorted some of his former friends, and pointed out to them the error of their ways.

Mr. Wolff however had taken up—if not with opinions peculiar to the Irvingites, yet with opinions on some points which found advocates chiefly among the members of that community, (though entertained also by others;) and which we believe were originally broached by persons who afterwards were led into their error. We allude particularly to the manner in which *Missionary exertions* have been disparaged, and an odium attempted to be fixed on all societies having for their object to evangelize the world. We have in the first Volume of the Investigator entered largely into the Missionary question, and shown what very erroneous notions have been entertained by the ardent friends of missions, with regard to the result to be looked for from the agency now at work; and what very unscriptural

statements are continually heard from the platforms of some of our evangelical societies. But there is a wide difference between endeavouring to bring christians to view their present missionary labors, and the probable result of those labors, more in accordance with the word of God; and endeavouring to paralyse their exertions altogether. In bringing back men's expectations to the word of God, and leading them "to strive lawfully," we may indeed lose much spurious excitement to a work; but we shall be far more likely to persevere and patiently to labour and suffer; and may with much more confidence look for the blessing from on high. We are happy however to state, that in this matter Mr. Wolff has decidedly retraced his steps. The great utility of these societies has in various instances forced itself upon his notice, as he has journeyed through heathen countries; and he has honourably and freely given glory to God.

We are happy also to lend our aid toward dis-abusing the christian public of a prejudice against Mr. Wolff on another point. He complains at page 198, that some had asserted, that since he believed the personal reign of Christ, he had ceased to preach Jesus Christ *crucified*. Mr. Wolff is not the only one who has suffered in this respect; but whilst many have had this odium most unjustly affixed to them, some have given real occasion for it. There is a tendency among all men to make too much of a discovery, and to magnify beyond their just proportions important truths, which have been previously overlooked: and sometimes the ministers of the Gospel have been provoked to dwell more than they otherwise would have done upon a doctrine, by the *resistance* which they met with to it. Thus it happens, that those who are most zealous to set forth the doc-

trines of divine grace are sometimes accused of dwelling exclusively on these topics to the neglect of enforcing evangelical tempers and works and duties;—and doubtless there is often as much foundation for the charge, as in the instance of the preachers of the Second Advent being accused of giving it undue prominence. Mr. Wolff's *Journal* however in a measure exculpates him from the charge; and particularly, on the occasion when he complains, he had been conversing (he says) during a whole night on Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

We must here however, in passing, warn our Readers against an opposite extreme in this matter. Some, when they point to the fact, that St. Paul resolved to know nothing among the Corinthians "save Jesus Christ and him crucified," (1 Cor. ii. 2) conclude that he confined himself to the single tenet of the *atonement* through the blood of Christ. Nothing can be more absurd, or more completely refuted by the contents of that very epistle in which the above declaration is found. There is not, on the one hand, so large a portion of the apostle's writings any where, in which the doctrine of the *cross* is, abstractedly, dwelt so little on; and in which, on the other hand, topics connected with the second advent are dwelt so *largely* on. Witness the long exposition in chapter xv. on the kingdom of Christ and the resurrection; and the allusions to the judgment, and to the rule of the saints in chapters iv. and vi. Indeed the Apostle in the first chapter seems to speak, as if the proper evidence *that they came behind in no gift* was, that they were "*waiting for the coming* of the Lord Jesus Christ." The epistle also abounds with directions on points of morality and social order, and on the spirit and tempers. But is all this any contradiction to the apos-

tle's statement?—Decidedly not. Christ is the *foundation*, and all these things are the *superstructure* erected on it. By the cross we are led to consider the sinfulness of sin, the need of regeneration, and the only mode of justification;—by the cross we are admonished that we must also crucify the lusts of the flesh and be conformed to the death of Christ;—and by the cross we are reminded of the joy set before the Lord, for which he endured this death, and unto the lively hope of which joy we also are begotten by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.—“Therefore leaving the *principles* of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on hands, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment.—And this will we do, if God permit.” (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

Whilst however we exonerate Mr. Wolff from blame in the above matters, we desire to see him more considerate in regard to his mode of stating prophetic doctrine itself. We shall quote a passage illustrative of what we mean. At page 482 we find a letter to him from the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa, dated 6th Nov. 1833, in which we read as follows: “You assure me that the said Old and New Testament, which contains the glorious news of the establishment of our Lord Jesus Christ's personal reign on earth in the city of Jerusalem fourteen years hence, is presented for my edification.”—

Now we hold, that there are certain broad truths of prophecy which are literally and distinctly revealed, and which are as susceptible of clear demonstration, as are those truths which are commonly called the doctrines of grace; and though there may be literal passages of a seemingly opposite tendency, yet this a-

gain is no more than is the case in regard to the aforementioned doctrines of grace; and they are as reconcilable in the one case as in the other. Such are the wrath which is coming upon the nations; the conversion and restoration of the Jews; the premillennial advent of Christ; the resurrection of the saints at the same time; and the kingdom then to be manifested in glory. We repeat, that we consider these points openly revealed, and demonstrable by the plainest and most simple principles. But there are points also which are veiled in symbols and in metaphors; or in other ways rendered obscure to us; insomuch that scarcely any two expositors of Scripture are led to the same conclusions in regard to them. We allude to *some* of the things contained in Daniel and in the Apocalypse, and among them more especially to the *dates*. It is questioned among many students of prophecy, if it be given to man to know more than the prognostics which indicate our Lord's being at hand, and which are to be judged of by the signs of the times, whilst the actual year of his coming is involved in an obscurity which none can successfully penetrate. Mr. Wolff must well know, that many of his prophetic friends, who aim at these things, do nevertheless differ among themselves; and however therefore it may be useful (and we would insist upon the utility) for those whose senses are exercised to discern, and who can receive strong meat to discuss these things; yet we very decidedly deprecate their being made the groundwork of discussion among men, who, instead of being received to doubtful disputations, have need to be taught the first principles of the doctrine of Christ,—such as Roman Catholics, Mahometans, Infidels, and Idolaters. We make no objection therefore to Mr. Wolff's writing to the Indian chief Runjeet

Singh, exhorting him and his people to repent, and declaring that Jesus Christ is the son of God, who died for our sins, rose again, and went to heaven; and that He will come again in the clouds of heaven; and that great judgments are already beginning to announce his coming: viz. pestilence, earthquakes, and cholera morbus." (p. 261.)—They are not the signs perhaps which we should *chiefly* select; but they are among them; and if the statement be followed up by the *other* signs, we should deem it unobjectionable. But when he fixes upon the precise year 1847 for the coming of the Lord, he leaves the plain and beaten track of exposition, and (as we think) gets into the thicket. Mr. Wolff must be aware, that other dates, assigned on plausible grounds, have failed: the time is passed over "and we are not saved." If it be justifiable in Mr. Wolff, as a follower of Mr. Frere, to preach the year 1847, it is justifiable in the admirers of Bengelius to preach the year 1836.—Let us suppose then, that under similar circumstances Rabbins and Mullahs and Papists had been by some other missionary advertised of the *latter* date for the Lord's coming,—that this year should pass away without the event taking place,—and that Mr. Wolff should in the year 1837 meet with some of these, and be thus addressed by them, when he proclaims the year 1847:—"Be-gone, thou false prophet! one of thine own sect has been here and given to us a sign, that he whom thou callest Jesus should appear in Jerusalem in 1836; but the sign is not come to pass; and we have now therefore clear testimony, from a prophet of thine own, that thy religion is not true." Now when we consider the signs of the times, we confess we are so moved by them as to think it by no means improbable that the

Lord may appear *before* the year 1847, in which case, though Mr. Wolff would not save his own individual credit, as to that particular year, yet would the injury likely to result to christianity be averted; but in the mean while we confess, that we tremble for the possible result among those individuals in heathen countries who are mindful of the words of Mr. Wolff, and who have received their knowledge of christianity only from him.

There are many things of a similarly objectionable character betrayed in the long controversy between Mr. Wolff, and the learned Emeer Seyed Ahmed at Lucknow. Mussulman as he is, he nevertheless, as we think, obtains the advantage, in some points, against the Christian-Jew. Thus he writes to Mr. Wolff,—“To fix years is contrary to the words of Christ, for it is written in Matt. xxiv. 36, ‘But of *that day and hour* knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.’ You said in answer to this at the conference, ‘that the meaning of this verse is, that no one knows the *day* and *hour* except God, but it does not say that the *year* cannot be known.’ This is surprising, &c.” (p. 387.) And then he presses objections which drive Mr. Wolff back upon that ground, from which he should not have been tempted to advance in the first instance;—that our Lord does not intend to say by this, “that the *approach* of the time shall not be known, but that the exact *day* and *hour* knoweth no man; enough he does say shall be known by the signs of the times to induce us to prepare for his coming, as Noah prepared the ark; for he compares those days to the days of Noah.” (p. 394.) We think that Mr. Wolff here greatly modifies his statement, and makes an important concession to the shrewd Mahometan. And we

fear that there is matter in the remaining points involved in the discussion, which prevent Mr. Wolff from coming off triumphantly, notwithstanding the elaborate exposition of the subject with which he is supported by Mr. Frere, and which is printed in the Journal. It must strike their antagonist likewise as a strange circumstance, and lead him to conclude that the prophetic truths of Christianity must be founded upon a very capricious basis, to find the disciple with whom he disputes taking 2300 years as the period of the vision of Daniel VIII. and the master assuming 2400 years to be the true reading, and declaring that his disciple was *aware of it* !

The statements of Mr. Wolff in regard to prophecy have drawn forth some kind and judicious hints from the Rev. Mr. Duff, the eminent Missionary of the Scottish Society ; whose advice Mr. Wolff himself elicited, and whose letter Mr. Wolff with great candour and simplicity publishes in his journal. Mr. Duff says :—" I might say, that it would be well to introduce the subject of the Millennium at all times with a notification, that you did not consider your view of it an essential article of faith ; but merely as your own opinion, which you are ready to deliver when required. I would suggest that you might always limit and define what you mean by the *literal* interpretation of prophecy ; not literal always in *word*, but in *sense*." p. 435. The latter hint we consider a very sagacious one, and wish the definition were more frequently kept in view. The former we likewise concur in, on the assumption that Mr. Duff alludes to matters of *detail* respecting the condition of the saints and men in the flesh, &c. during the Millennium ;—matters in regard to which many have advanced unwarrantable imaginations. But if by " the Mil-

lennium," Mr. Duff means those *demonstrable* points which we have before enumerated, we should deprecate the distinction of *essential* and *non-essential*, as calculated to lead Christians to suppose, that they are at liberty to neglect the latter ; which consequently proves a means of those doctrines being at length lost sight of by the Church, and this to the unavoidable detriment and loss of many, as we are persuaded has been the case in the present instance. We believe that we are, in the most fundamental sense, *saved* by the precious blood of Christ, and therefore that the atonement is an important doctrine : but we believe also that we are "*saved by hope* ;"—and as this declaration is immediately connected with the redemption of the body, the deliverance of creation from bondage, and the manifestation of the sons of God, (Rom. VIII. 19—24) we are bound to consider these matters important likewise ; and no man can say—as regards the means which God may employ to *keep* him in the way, after he has awakened him—how connecting a link in the chain of salvation any one doctrine of divine revelation may prove.

We must not conclude without observing, that there is much in Mr. Wolff's Journal which renders it interesting : the latter part of his travels, narrating his adventures, after his entering upon the territories of Runjeet Singh, has more of the charm about it of romance, than of the sobriety of real life. We must confine ourselves however to a notice of that which forms the principal object of Mr. Wolff's enterprise, viz. his researches after the *Ten Tribes* ; and this leads us back rather to the earlier part of his narrative. It was a desire to explore the regions of Bokhara and Affghanistan that first prompted him to

undertake his perilous journey. Our readers are doubtless aware that many conceive the Affghans to be descended from the ten tribes who were led into captivity : we may sum up the discoveries of Mr. Wolff concerning them in the following statement.

He was informed by the Jews of Bokhara and Balkh, cities of Toorkestaun which he visited, that they are the ancient *Habor* and *Halah* mentioned in 2 Kings xvii. 6, and xviii. 11 ; but that the Jews lost their *written* account of this matter in the time of Jenghis Khan. This account was corroborated by the Musselman Mullahs ; who told him further, that the first name of Balkh was *Hanah* and afterwards it became *Halah*, and that it had been built by a son of Adam. Mr. Wolff was indeed himself led to conclude, that Toorkistaun is the same as *the land of Nod*, and Balkh the situation where Nod stood. (p. 186.) This appears to decide, so far as tradition can do it, that this is the region in which the ten tribes were formerly located.

In regard to the inhabitants of this region, the same Jews of Bokhara informed him, that they emigrated from Babylon to Persia, and settled at Sabzawar, two day's journey from *Meshed* ; and that before the time of Jenghis Khan they were carried to Balk and to Samarcand. When Samarcand fell into ruins a great number of them went to Bokhara ; and there, they say, they found *many who originally came from Babylon*, and of whom *many had emigrated to China*, which they call *Tsheen Patsheen* ; and that these *took their genealogies with them*.

Mr. Wolff further says, that the Jews of *Meshed*, mentioned above, have not the Talmud ; that they keep themselves entirely secluded from their neighbours, and never intermarry with them, nor even with

the Jews of Yazed, on account of the bad character of the latter ; that they have no hatred towards Jesus Christ, neither have those of Toorkestaun and Khorossaun ; which caused Mr. Wolff to infer, that they were of the ten tribes who had no share in the crucifixion. (page 159.) He also states, that the Jews believed the Affghans to be descendants of the Jews ; an admission which we may be quite sure a Jew would be slow to make in regard to those who are living as Gentiles, unless he had strong and irresistible reasons for so concluding. And he adds, that Aga Levi, one of these Jews, informed him, that the tribes of *Benjamin*, *Simeon* and *Joseph* were carried to *Candahar* ; where they lost their books, and then turned Mahommedans. Page 134.

On the other hand Mr. Wolff has some doubts respecting the Affghans ; First, because they have not the Jewish physiognomy ; secondly, because there existed a contrary tradition, that they were descended from the *Copts* ; thirdly, because he could only trace one word in their language which was strictly Hebrew, viz. *אור* or, light. (p. 231.) He confesses however, that there were two tribes of this people—the *Youssuf Szeze* and the *Khaibaree*, “ which cannot be looked upon without astonishment.—They are the only two tribes having a Jewish countenance ; their customs are quite patriarchal ; and they are the most hospitable of the Affghans.” (p. 242.) Mr. Wolff also believes, and gives documentary proof, that the *proper names* of the Affghans in general are in numerous instances Jewish. They have many Hebrew names in their genealogy in tracing themselves up to *Affghana* their ancestor ; and before him all is regularly Hebrew up to Abraham. (p. 241—2.)

There exists opposing testimony

to Mr. Wolff, as regards their language, of high authority. Sir William Jones says, that the best Persian historians declare them to be descended from the Jews: and that their families are distinguished by the names of the Jewish tribes: although since their conversion to Islamism, they *studiously conceal their origin*.—"The Pushtoolanguage (he adds) *of which I have seen a dictionary, has a manifest resemblance to the Chaldaic.*" And he notices the fact, that the Apocryphal Ezra speaks of a portion of the ten tribes who separated from the rest, and settled in a district which he calls *Arsareth*, and that there was then a considerable district under the dominion of the Affghans, which they call *Hazareth* or *Hazaret*.* Captain S. Riley of Nusseerabad, a letter from whom is likewise inserted in the Journal (p. 227,) believes the Affghans to be of Jewish descent, on account of the great number of Hebrew proper names in their appellatives, and their dialect still retaining the genitive sign of the Chaldee, and other marks of cognate affinity. From a note in Mr. Bickersteth's recently published "Guide to Prophecy" we also learn, that the missionaries Carey and Marshman state "that in the Pushtoo or Affghan language there are more Hebrew words than in that of any other nation:" and they quote a learned Affghan as saying, "that his nation are *Beni Israel*, but not *Yahood*"—that is to say, sons of Israel, but not Jews.

The most reasonable conclusion therefore is, that Mr. Wolff is mistaken in regard to their language. He did not understand it, but merely picked up a few words as he travelled, which were given to him in answer to his inquiries, as the names of objects to which he probably

pointed. This afforded him no opportunity of judging of the inflexions of the words as they come under regimen; which is the point to which Captain Riley speaks: nor is a column or two of words accidentally assorted, to be put in competition with the *dictionary* which Sir William Jones declares he inspected. Neither does it account for the admitted fact of the number of Hebrew appellatives.

There are some speculations of Mr. Wolff, in regard to the existence of the *ten tribes* in other parts, which as they rest on no satisfactory grounds we forbear to enter upon; and we therefore conclude our remarks with the notice of two or three very practicable improvements which Mr. Wolff may make, should he publish a third edition of his Journal. 1st we would recommend the suppression of those numerous *letters* and *notes* printed verbatim, and which often contain little more than an invitation to visit the house of a friend, or an expression of kindness towards Mr. Wolff; whilst the complimentary part of them is liable to misapprehension. 2ndly. We would advise that letters in foreign languages should be translated, for the benefit of English readers. 3rdly. The numerous genealogical lists and other documents, useful only for reference, with which the work abounds, would have been better thrown into an Appendix. And 4thly. Mr. Wolff often records some infidel or sceptical remarks, made by an antagonist in the course of argument, without informing us, how he met the argument; and he sometimes relates forcible things said by himself, without telling us what impression they made, or how they were met. This gives an abrupt character to his work, and often disappoints the reader, just when he has excited his interest.

* Asiatic Researches, vol. I. p. 336.

Intelligence, New Publications, &c.

FALSE PROPHECIES.—A new Pamphlet has just made its appearance, by Robert Baxter, Esq. of Doncaster, entitled “Irvingism, in its Rise, Progress and Present State.” It contains a brief historical sketch of that delusion, which will be found particularly interesting to those who are unacquainted with its real character; and we would hope, and do sincerely pray, that it may likewise be made useful to some of those who are at present under its influence; among whom, we are free to confess, there are many whose piety we admire, whilst we deprecate their “pernicious ways.” As the conductors of a Journal on Prophecy we consider it our bounden duty to notice and to exhibit in their true colours those pretensions to *prophetic inspiration* which may force themselves upon our observation in the course of our labours: for if these pretensions be genuine, doubtless the voice which they utter ought to be listened to; whereby the effort of the student to ascertain by dint of laborious investigation the meaning of the prophetic portion of Scripture would be greatly shortened: and if they be not genuine, they ought as certainly to be exposed, as mischievous devices of Satan, which are intended, on the one hand, to draw off inquiring men from the patient and sober study of the prophetic word; and, on the other hand, to bring that word into contempt among indolent and superficial professors. The failure of *one* Irvingite prophecy we noticed in the Number which closed our former series; Mr. Baxter in addition brings forward *four* others which have equally failed up to the present time; besides various conflicting and contradictory “utterances”

to which he points. They have been promised by the spirit, which is revered among them, apostles possessed of a full endowment of miraculous gifts, with a power of bestowing the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands;—they were to have had a baptism of fire;—they were to have had an abundant outpouring of *all* the miraculous gifts, particularly of those which would have endured the scrutiny of the sceptical;—they were to have sent forth Missionaries to all parts of the earth, qualified by miraculous gifts to preach in all languages: but none of these things have come to pass! But we recommend the Book itself; by which the reader will at once be enabled to judge, whether he is to view the alleged prophecies and gifts as the work of the Holy Ghost; or as the indication of the rising up in the last days of those “false prophets,” “false apostles,” and “false christs,” of which he will find mention as among the signs of the last times. The Pamphlet is published by Nisbet, price One Shilling.

“**COME AND SEE.**”—The Work announced in our last Number under this title by H. S. L. as preparing for publication *by Subscription*, is for the present suspended: we shall be happy to give notice should its publication be resumed. A summary of the views of the writer, to be contained in a series of papers, has been offered to us for publication; but considering that they would probably conflict with Mr. Frere’s exposition now publishing, and thus perplex the reader, we have thought it better for the present to defer them.

THE COTTAGEE'S GUIDE.—We are desirous to call the attention of our readers to a *very* useful little work for circulation among the poor, published under the forgoing title in numbers, by the Rev. E. Bickersteth, Rector of Watton. Part I. containing four numbers may now be had in cloth, price *nine-pence*; or either of the four numbers separately at *twopence* each. They are upon the following subjects:—No. I. The Holy Scriptures;—No. II. The Great God;—No. III. Creation;—No. IV. Providence. This enumeration of their contents evinces that they are neither exclusively nor professedly *prophetical*: but prophetical topics are nevertheless very judiciously and practically intermingled. We may instance for example, in the first number, the section entitled—"The Bible shows us what is to take place;"—"The display of God's perfections," and "God our salvation;" in the second,—“The New Creation;” in the third,—and “The Signs of the Times” in the fourth.

MARAMENSIS.—We beg to direct attention to a letter from our old and esteemed Correspondent, Maramensis, which is on page 5 of the Cover. He feels himself aggrieved by the observations we applied to his concluding remarks and general opinions in the Postscript to the last volume of our former Series; but when we received his letter we hesitated to give it insertion from a conviction that it would, in the very first number of our New Series, reopen that controversy which it was one object of the new Series to close. We regret some of our expressions, which when pointed out to us by our Correspondent appear to convey a feeling of contempt for him, which was far from being entertained by us. In a second letter which we have received, he thinks

us called upon to say, that the title prefixed to his paper in that number—viz. “Summary of the views of Maramensis”—was not *his* choosing but *ours*: this we readily acknowledge. He also considers that we represented his opinions as being diametrically opposed to ours, whereas the difference is not of *kind* but of *degree*. We must leave *this* for the judgment of the Reader; as well as all other topics touched upon in the letter. We should not have printed it at all, but that in his second letter Maramensis restricts us from making any allusion to it without we publish the whole: and therefore, that we may not misrepresent him, we give it entire: but we refrain from comment that we may not provoke reply.

New Publications.

THE CRISIS; or the approaching grand religious Revolution, and the fall of the national Churches, &c.; in which events are traced down to the present time and the nature of the great crisis which is approaching is shewn from the Word of God. By B. D. BOGIE, B. A. Rector of Lusby. London; Hamilton & Co. 4s. 6d. cloth.

DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.—By A LAYMAN. Interpreted as 490 years of the temporal covenant with the seed of Abraham, determined upon the house of Judah for the purpose of bringing in the Most Holy through the Tribe—From a decree of Xerxes (shewn to be the Darius of Ezra) to the building of the wall, seven, weeks—To the birth of Messiah, when the sceptre departed from Judah, sixty-two weeks—The covenant at that time suspended by the Romans—Renewed for seven years on their expulsion. Also suggestions as to difficulties in the Apocryphal books of Esdras and Judith. Lond. Rivington: 12mo. 5s.

Reprints and Extracts.

SUMMARY OF DR. GILL'S SIX SERMONS.

(Concluded from page 59.)

SERMON IV.

2 CHRON. XX. 20. *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established ;—believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

The Jews are here considered as typical of the church militant, surrounded with enemies. The method of Jehosaphat, in the distress of his people, was to seek help of the Lord by *prayer* : and the Lord immediately heard and answered prayer, for the Spirit came upon Jahaziel, a Levite, who stood up and prophesied and bade the people not to be dismayed at the number of their enemies, for that the Lord would fight for them, and that they had only to stand still and see his salvation. This message produced an immense impression ;—they marched singing praises to meet the enemy ;—and Jehosaphat at the head of his army now addressed it in the words of the text. From them he takes occasion to consider 1st The nature of the FAITH here exhorted to ; 2dly The *objects* of it ; 3dly The *advantages* arising from it.

I. He shows that there are several kinds of faith ; as the faith which enabled its possessor to work miracles ; and also an historical faith, as when the mind merely assents to the proposition that there is one God ;—both of which kinds of faith he proves from Scripture to be different from the faith which justifies and effectually works unto salvation. (1 Cor. XIII. 3 ; Jas. II. 19.) He treats however of *special* faith, which he shews to be not of the will of man, but the gift of God, (Eph. II. 8 ; 2 Thessa. III. 2.) and being therefore a fruit of the Holy

Spirit, (Gal. v. 22.) it is called, when it effectually works in any, the Spirit of faith. (1 Cor. IV. 13.)

II. The objects of faith he proceeds to shew are 1st "*the Lord God*,"—that is, the triune Jehovah ; and secondly, "*his prophets*,"—being sent by Him and bringing a message from Him, and declaring His will : so the children at the Red Sea "*believed the Lord and his servant Moses*." (Exod. XIV. 31.)

By *the prophets* are meant the prophets of the Old Testament, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; for the Spirit of the Lord spake by them and his word was in their tongue ; (2 Pet. I. 21 ; 2 Sam. XXIII. 2) and the writings of the prophets form part of those Scriptures which are "*all given by inspiration of God and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness*,"—"for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. XV. 4 ; 2 Tim. III. 16.) These considerations ought to recommend the writings of the prophets to our faith and love ; and the more especially since it is in them almost exclusively that witness is given, in the Old Testament, to Christ ; for "they testified before-hand of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory which should follow." And these considerations apply with the greater force to us in these days, when the far greater part of what they prophesied of is come to pass :—as the first and second captivities of the Jews,—the birth, sufferings and death of Mes-

siah, with the spread of his Gospel in the earth,—many things concerning Cyrus and Darius kings of Persia, Alexander the Great, and the kings of Egypt and Syria, &c.

But the prophets of the New Testament must likewise be included. The Lord specially calls them “prophets and wise men,” when he foretells to the Jews the manner in which they would persecute them; (Matt. xxiii. 34) for they were not only preachers of the doctrine in general of Christ, but did likewise shew to the Church things to come;—on both which accounts they are to be believed. John the Evangelist was indeed eminently a prophet: witness the Apocalypse, “which is ‘a prophecy of what should be in ‘the world and the Church from his ‘days to the second advent of ‘Christ; great part of which has ‘already been fulfilled; and there ‘is all the reason in the world to ‘believe the rest will be accomplished. The sayings in it are “the sayings of God, and they are faithful and true,”—BELIEVE what he ‘has said by this his prophet. The ‘ordinary preachers of the word are ‘called *prophets*, and their preaching *prophesying*;^{*} and though we ‘are “not to believe every spirit,” ‘—or every man that pretends to ‘be a spiritual man and a prophet, ‘—but are to “*try* the spirits whether they be of God” by his word, ‘which is the standard of faith and

‘practice, (because many false prophets are gone out into the world; ‘1 John iv. 1) yet such as bring ‘the doctrines of Christ with them, ‘and those things which are agreeable to the word of God and are ‘established by it, ought to be believed, and their sayings received, ‘not as the word of man, but, as ‘they are in truth, the word of God.”

Not to believe these things—viz. the divine revelation which God hath made both by the prophets of the Old and New Testaments, is the *damning* sin of unbelief so much spoken of in the New Testament;—it was the sin of the Jews who rejected Christ;—it is the sin of the deists of the present day who reject him;—and the sin of all who deny, despise, neglect or disobey his whole Gospel. “And this is the condemnation, viz. that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light.” (John iii. 19.) This *unbelief* it is which is the cause of men’s damnation.

III. The advantages arising from faith in God and his word are—*establishment and prosperity*.

By establishment is not meant the state of the people of God; for that is firm and stable, and cannot be made more so; for they are built on a sure foundation, and nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord: it has respect to their hearts, frames, graces and duties. For their

* The references here are to 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4, 5, 29, 32, 37. In regard to these places it has been questioned, whether the term *prophesying* can signify more in some of them than a mere preaching of doctrine, irrespective of the predicting things to come. To this it may be observed, that a preacher does in a certain sense *prophecy* when he adopts or sets forth or expounds the prophecies that have gone before him. It is not needful for him to be inspired to give forth original predictions. All who are true preachers of the kingdom of God will in that character announce the kingdom to be at hand. Their Gospel is—“the Gospel of the *kingdom*.” They warn men of the coming wrath and the coming glory; and shew the way also of escaping the one and attaining to the other. It is thus that our Lord appears to term all his disciples *prophets* in Matt. x. 41, with special reference to the *warnings* they set forth of the punishment that will come on those who deny him, and the reward which those who receive such a prophet, in the name and character of a prophet, shall be partakers of.—ED.

hearts are often very unsettled; they are unstable as water, and melt like wax; and their frames are changeable and varying, so that at one while their mountain stands strong, and the next God hides his face and they are troubled; and he that seemed stedfast in the faith will fall from some degree of stedfastness in it, and his graces will wane, and he will become negligent in his duties. But faith in God, and with reference to his prophetic word, has a tendency to establish the heart of such: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings." And when *faith* comes into lively exercise, so does *hope*; and he who possesses these graces will be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

Prosperity also arises from faith in God and his word: not so much temporal as spiritual prosperity, such as Gaius had whom John thus salutes—"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* (3 John 2.) Now the soul is in good health and in a prosperous condition, when there is an appetite for the *word*,—when it delights in the sincere milk of it, and hungers and thirsts for righteousness;—when it likewise has a comfortable view by faith of the forgiveness of sins, (for sin is disease, and pardon is the healing of it,)—when there is peace and joy in believing. The faith of such a one will end in victory: "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v. 5.)

Seeing that such are the advantages of believing in God and his word, "take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb. iii. 12.)

* The learned and pious Author appears here to overlook greatly that *national* and therefore *temporal* prosperity and stability of kingdoms, which may be expected, if, in their national character, they act faith in God's word; and which is the special subject alluded to in the text.—Ed.

SERMON V.

ISAIAH IX. 7.—*The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*

This Sermon professedly treats on the sure performance of those glorious things foretold concerning the Church in the latter day, which were discoursed of in Sermon III. "I hinted in my last annual discourse, that great part of prophecy, and particularly of the book of Revelation has been fulfilled, and that the rest will be: and this hint I shall pursue and enlarge upon at this time."

He considers the former verse of the chapter containing the text to have been fulfilled by Christ sojourning in *Galilee*, and performing there his chief miracles. He states that the ancient Jews *expected* that the Messiah would first appear in Galilee; and conceives that they grounded the expectation on this passage: doubtless it was owing to his frequent residence there that he came afterwards to be called *the Galilean*. The previous state of barbarism and darkness in which the Galileans were plunged, and their illumination by means of the ministry and miracles of Christ among them, he thinks is foretold in verse 2—"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light &c."

Verse 3. "Thou hast multiplied the nation," he interprets of the multiplied glory, light, &c. exhibited in the land; together with the numerous believers gathered to the Lord from out of it: for he infers that the five hundred who saw our Lord at one time (1 Cor. xv. 6) must have been in Galilee; since the number of disciples at Jerusalem, after the death of our Lord, only amounted to one hundred and

twenty. "It is foretold (he adds) that there should be great joy upon all this. Our version indeed renders it, "*not* increased the joy:" but the marginal reading of the Hebrew text is, "*and increased* joy unto it," the nation. Or it may be rendered with an interrogation, and take in both the textural and marginal readings—"hast thou not increased the joy?" In one or other of these ways it must be rendered, otherwise there is a glaring contradiction of the text."

The ground of this joy was deliverance from a "burdensome yoke," (v. 4) which was effected by Christ delivering these, as likewise all his people, from the ceremonial law, which was "a yoke of bondage," from the tyranny of Satan, and from the servitude of sin.

In ver. 6 Christ is prophesied of as the author of all this, and the child that should be born and given. It is the same child prophesied of in chap. vii. 14, who was to be born of a virgin and called Immanuel, that is here declared to be "the mighty God the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace," and upon whose shoulders the government was to be laid.

All the above things have been performed already; that which remains to be performed are the increase of his government and peace, with the order and establishment of it, as declared in the beginning of v. 7. The stone is not yet become a great mountain which fills the earth. Little peace has as yet attended the Church of Christ; but then there shall be an abundance of peace;—then his kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;—then shall the nations learn war no more, and none shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

Having given this slight sketch

of the context, the Author next passes on to consider other things that remain to be performed; and to show that the performance of them will be through the zeal of the Lord of Hosts. These are—

1st. The destruction of Antichrist (see the observations in Sermon III.) All that believe a divine revelation allow that there is, or will be, what is commonly called *Antichrist*—not only Protestants, but even Jews and Papists. In the Psalms of David there are frequent hints of him and of his destruction: as that the man of the earth shall no more oppress, when the Lord shall reign for ever;—and the heathen, or Gentiles, shall be delivered out of his hand;—and also when the Messiah is said to wound the head over many countries. i. e. Antichrist, who has reigned over the kings and kingdoms of the earth;—and respect seems to be had to his followers, when it is wished, that the sinners may be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more. See Psalm x. 16, 18; cx. 6, and civ. 35, at the end of which latter verse the word *Hallelujah* is first used,—the same term used at the destruction of mystical Babylon.

We have however a famous prophecy of him in Dan. vii. where he is symbolized by a *little horn* having eyes like the eyes of a man, which horn rises out of the ten horns of the fourth beast. "This horn can-
' not be Antiochus Epiphanes (as
' Grotius, Junius, and others have
' thought;) for not a *single* person
' or king is meant by a horn, but a
' kingdom or state, and a succession
' of rulers and governors in it; as
' by the other ten horns are meant
' ten *kingdoms*, (v. 24) and, besides,
' this little horn is a part of the
' *fourth* beast, and not of the *third*,
' to which latter Antiochus belonged;
' ed; and was to rise therefore, not

in the third, but in the fourth monarchy; not in the Grecian but in the Roman Empire; and moreover was to continue until the coming of Christ, &c. And as there is no other has appeared in the fourth empire but the Pope of Rome, to whom the characters agree, it may be safely concluded that *he* is intended, as will more fully appear by a description of him.*—

1. He is described as “a *little horn*,” a horn being the emblem of power, denotes a powerful principality or kingdom. The Pope therefore rose from small beginnings; for at first he was but a common pastor or bishop of a single church; then he became metropolitan of Italy; and at last he commenced as universal bishop: though the prophecy seems rather to regard his temporal dominion, which was but little, in his own proper domain, in comparison of other horns; though being allowed to exercise power in the rest of the kingdoms, and their power and strength being given to him, he was so formidable that none could withstand him or make war with him. Rev. xvii. 13 and xiii. 4.

2. The popedom is described in the *origin* of this horn; for he is said to “come up among them.” For when the northern barbarians broke into the Roman empire and set

up ten kingdoms, in it, this little horn sprang up among them; and thus the ten horns in Rev. xvii. 12 are said “to receive power as kings one hour with the *beast*,” which is this little horn. Indeed in verse 24 this little horn is said to rise *after* them,—i. e. after the other ten kingdoms were established; for indeed it was by their giving their strength and power to him that he became a *horn*, or temporal prince.* The Septuagint renders it “*behind* them;” which Mr. Mede understands of his growing up unawares and unobserved by them, till he overstepped them.† He is said to be *diverse* from the ten: for they only exercised a secular power: whereas he, besides this, obtained great power by an influence over the souls and consciences of men, and even over the ten horns or kingdoms. Hence he is represented in the Apocalypse by *two* beasts, the one describing his secular, the other his spiritual authority.‡ Moreover before him three of the ten horns are plucked up, or fall; which is interpreted for us of his subduing three kingdoms, (verses 20, 24) and which according to Sir Isaac Newton were the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the dukedom of Rome.^a The Bishop of Clogher has more recently express-

* Dr. Gill overlooks here, as most commentators do who apply Rev. xvii. 12, 13 to the papacy, that the ten horns give their power and strength and kingdom to the *beast* for the purpose of *destroying* the Babylonish Harlot, and not of aggrandising her. (Rev. xvii. 16, 17.)—If therefore the Harlot is interpreted to be the Romish church the view taken does not in these particulars apply; but they must refer to a later period of the papacy.—Ed.

† This appears to be a hypercriticism in Mede, founded upon a disregard of the context in the Septuagint. For in verse 8 that version has *ἐν μεσση αὐτῶν*; and it appears contrary to the rules of sound criticism, to interpret the *οπισω αὐτῶν* of verse 24 so as to contradict this. It should be understood therefore as referring to *time* and not to *place*, (as in Matt. iii. 11; John i. 15; v. 27, 30.) and to signify ‘*after* them.’ Mede has nevertheless been followed in this verse by able interpreters.—Ed.

‡ Later Commentators appear with more accuracy to interpret the two beasts of Rev. xiii. not of the pope’s *own* temporal dominions and his spiritual power; but of the secular power of the whole *Roman empire*, comprising all the ten horns, as distinguished from the pope’s spiritual or ecclesiastical authority.—Ed.

^a “Observations on Daniel,” p. 75—85.



ed them thus : The Campagna of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the region of Pentapolis.^b These were plucked up by Pepin and Charlemagne, kings of France, and given to the Pope, and were confirmed to him by their successor, Lewis the pious, and make up what is called the patrimony of St. Peter. "In memory of this transaction a piece of Mosaic work was made for the Pope's palace, in which was presented St. Peter with three keys in his lap, signifying the keys of the three parts of his patrimony ;^c and to show his sovereignty over them, the pope to this very day wears a *triple* crown. How surprisingly does the prophecy open unto us ! an event is here predicted above a thousand years before it was accomplished !"

3. The little horn is further described by its *eyes* and *look* : "its eyes were like the eyes of man,"—strange for a horn to have eyes like a *man* ! These seem to denote his sagacity, penetration and craft ;—particularly they may refer to the order of the Jesuits, who were as his *eyes*, or *spies*, in all kingdoms and courts. It is not said in the prophecy, *how many* eyes the horn has : the pope has more than Argus, and these sharp and piercing. His *look* also is said to be "more stout than his fellows ;"—i. e. either than his fellow bishops, over whom he claimed authority ; or than his fellow princes, over whom he assumed power to depose them and to absolve their subjects from their allegiance.

4. The horn is described by its *mouth*, as "speaking great things." This the pope has done by asserting himself to be the head of the Church, Christ's vicar on earth, infallible, and having power over kings and princes : yea, he is said to speak

great words against the Most High ; and this he does by setting himself on an equality with him, taking upon himself to forgive sin, to make laws contrary to the Scriptures and preferring his own decrees to the word of God. (See Rev. xiii. 5, 6.)

5. The horn is described as "*making war* with the saints," "prevailing against them" "and wearing them out ;" which respects the wars of the popes against the Albigenses and Waldenses, whom they slew in great numbers and got the victory over ; and also the oppression, persecution and massacre of the saints at various other times. And whereas the beast (who is the same with the little horn) shall hereafter make war with the two witnesses, and overcome and slay them, the saints will then seem to be quite worn out, and will be thought by the papists to be all destroyed ; and hence their rejoicing and sending gifts one to another. (Rev. xi. 8—10.)

6. Also he shall "think to change times and laws," which in Chap. ii. 21 is declared to be the prerogative of God, and joined with removing and setting up kings. But the pope has nevertheless taken to himself to alter the forms and constitutions of kingdoms, and to set up and pull down kings at his own pleasure ;—to change the use of times and seasons also, by setting apart days for the commemoration of saints and seasons for fasting ;—and he has dispensed with the laws of God, and changed them.

7. And this power of his was to continue "until a time and times and the dividing of a time"—or *half* a time as in Rev. xii. 14 : i. e. three years and a half, the same as the forty months and the 1260 days of Rev. xiii. 5 and xi. 2, 3 ;—by which are meant so many *years*. And when

^b "Impartial Enquiry into the time of the coming of the Messiah," p. 28.

^c Newton on Daniel, p. 86—88.

this time is up, then his dominion shall be *taken away* and be *consumed* and *destroyed*, &c. (Dan. vii. 11, 26)—“the whole empire shall be destroyed, the capital of it shall be burnt with fire, the ten kings shall hate the whore, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.”—*The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*

Another famous prophecy of Antichrist we have in 2 Thess. ii. 3—12, where he is described—

1st. By his names and characters. He is called *the man of sin*—one guilty of all manner of wickedness in high places, as lying, perjury, incest, adultery, sodomy, simony, sorcery, as the popes of Rome have been. Hence their seat is called *Sodom and Egypt*, and the whore *the mother of harlots*,—all abominations centering there. He is therefore with great propriety called, in Rev. xvii. 11, *Apollyon*, being the destroyer of the souls of men, and he is *the Son of perdition*, and goeth into perdition. He is also “the wicked (or *lawless*) one”—giving out that he is not subject to any human judicature; that he judges all and is judged by none; and that though he should send millions to hell, yet none ought to say, “O Lord the pope, what doest thou?”

2. He is also represented as he that *opposeth* Christ, being his adversary, and therefore called *Antichrist*. He opposes him in his kingly office, by making himself the head of the church;—he opposes him in his priestly office, by pretending to offer up Christ again, in the sacrifice of the mass, when by one offering Jesus has perfected for ever the whole work of the atonement;—and in his prophetic office, by coining new articles of faith. Moreover “he exalteth himself above all that is called God,”—viz. above the angels,

who are called gods in Ps. viii. 4,* for in his bulls he has commanded angels to take such or such a soul out of purgatory, and to carry such a one to heaven;†—and above all civil magistrates, who are called gods, Ps. lxxxii. 6: assuming, as before stated, power to depose them at pleasure; making an emperor to hold his stirrup whilst he alighted from his horse or got upon it, trampling on his neck, and using these words in Ps. xci. 13 as he did it—“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet;”—and throwing a king under his table to lick bones whilst he was eating.—Yea “he sitteth in the temple of God as God, shewing himself that he is God;”—admitting his creatures and flatterers to call him “God on earth” and “Our Lord God the pope;” receiving worship from them, and assuming to forgive sin, which is the peculiar prerogative of God.

3. He is described in this prophecy by his manner of entrance. There was something which at first *let* or *hindered* his appearance which being removed he was to be revealed. This was the undivided Roman Empire; for whilst the emperors kept their seat, he could not take his place and appear in his pomp. This was in part taken away by the removal of the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, which made way for the bishop of Rome to take his place; and then by the division of the empire into eastern and western; “when the latter became extinct in Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, who resigned to Odoacer, who took upon him the title, not of emperor of Rome, but king of Italy, and retired from Rome to Ravenna; and thus the

* This is a misquotation: perhaps he means Ps. xliii. 7.—Ed.

† He refers here to his Exposition of 2 Thess. ii. 4, in his Commentary.

' seat being empty, it was soon filled by the Pope of Rome, who appeared in his grandeur and glory." His coming was "after the working of Satan," like a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer, and by Satan's influence and assistance;—"with all power," i. e. with pretensions to all power both in heaven and earth;—and "by signs and lying wonders," pretending to work miracles, of which the papist legends are full; whilst under a shew of righteousness "he deceived many."

In another famous prophecy of of him (1 Tim. iv. 1—3,) he is described as teaching the "doctrines of devils," or demons. Demons were a sort of middle beings between God and men, who mediated between them; and such are the angels and departed saints to whom the papists direct men to pray; which is called in Rev ix. 20 "worshipping devils (or demons) and idols of gold, silver, &c." "Forbidding to marry" also, which, though God's ordinance, is prohibited to priests, and is the source of much debauchery. "Commanding to abstain from meats," as on their various fast days.

"And now whereas it is most clearly manifest, that all these characteristics of antichrist, predicted of him so long before his appearing, exactly answer to the Pope of Rome, and have been punctually accomplished; there can be no reason to doubt the certain performance of what the same prophetic Spirit has declared in the same prophecy of his destruction:—viz. "that the Lord shall consume him with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming."—This is confirmed by a prophecy of Isaiah delivered many hundred years before this of St. Paul's—"he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his

lips shall he destroy the wicked;—that wicked or lawless one. Antichrist. (Isa. xi. 4.) "The Targum interprets this of the wicked *Armilus*, the name of the Antichrist of the Jews, and which is either a corruption of *Romulus*, the first king of the Romans, (for they suppose he will come from Rome,) or of the Greek word *ερημολαος* a *waster of the people*; so Philip Aquinas interprets it (in Lex. fol. 36. 2) and it agrees well with what is said of Antichrist, Rev. xi. 18.

I will finally just observe of him in brief, that in Rev. xiii. he is described both in his civil and ecclesiastical capacity by two beasts, the one rising out of the *sea*, or commotions of the nations, when he appeared as a temporal prince; the other rising out of the *earth*, i. e. from the dregs of Christians, who had become earthly, carnal, corrupt, apostate. This latter has "two horns like a lamb;" for he pretends to great humility, calling himself *servus servorum*; but "he spake like a dragon" in his bulls and anathemas. He causes all to worship him, or be deprived of the common privileges of buying and selling, &c. (all which has been done by the Romish Antichrist,) and the account is concluded with the number of his name 666, "about which there have been many conjectures; but none bid fairer than the ancient one of Irenæus, which is *LATEINOS*, the letters of which amount to this number, and it was the name of a man, a king of Italy. For the Church of Rome is the *Latin Church*, its service is in the *Latin tongue*, and the Pope is the head of it, whose seat is in the *Latin empire*."

In chap. xvii. he is represented by a woman sitting on a beast, which designs him in his two-fold capacity as before; and as sitting

on many waters, which is interpreted of people and nations; and she is described as a great whore by her dress and attire, by her fornication, filthiness and murder, all which exactly points at, and has been fulfilled in, the church of Rome."

"And now who that considers these things, and observes the exact accomplishment of them, but will see abundant reason to believe, that what is said of the ruin of this Antichrist shall be performed; that the seven vials of God's wrath shall be poured out on the antichristian states; that the whore shall be burnt with fire; and that her seat, Rome, mystical Babylon, shall meet with the same fate, and the beast go into perdition; as is predicted? (Rev. xvi. 1, and xlii. 8, 16, and xviii. 10.) *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*"

II. But, secondly, the verse containing the text foretels the increase of the kingdom of Christ in the latter day; which will be owing to the vast number of Gentiles that will be called, and to the conversion of the Jews.

1. Many and ancient are the prophecies concerning the calling of the Gentiles: as that, when Shiloh should come, to him should be *the gathering of the people*—see Gen. xlix. 10; Isaiah xi. 10; xlii. 6 and lx. 4, 5; of which, though we have had a partial completion, yet not a full one; but this we shall have when all kings and nations shall serve and worship him.

2. The conversion of the Jews as a nation will greatly tend to accomplish this. Their captivity in Egypt and Babylon, with their deliverance from each, have been foretold and fulfilled. (See Gen. xv. 13, 14; Jer. xxv. 11 and xxix. 10.) And their dispersion over the world, and this by means of enemies whose language they should not understand, are likewise foretold

in Deut. xxviii. 20—68, at the distance of two thousand years, and have had their full accomplishment. But what is most surprising is, their *continuance*, notwithstanding all their afflictions, as a distinct people, down to the present times. (Lev. xxvi. 44; Jer. xxx. 2.) Several of the nations among whom they have been scattered have been, since that scattering, so mixed and confounded with other people, as that they cannot trace their original; as in Spain, France and England: yet these remain distinct! The reason of which is, evidently, that they may at their conversion be manifest to the world.

Seeing then that all these things have been accomplished, we may be assured that what concerns their future restoration will likewise be fulfilled;—see Hos. iii. 5; Zech. xii. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 16; Rom. xi. 25, 26; Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 22.—*The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*

3. By the above means the Author thinks the kingdom of Christ will be set up in the world in great glory. The seven seals which he considers to have been opened, and the six trumpets which have been blown, he views as so many steps toward the prevalence of the kingdom of Christ in the world. The sixth seal he interprets of the conversion of the Roman empire from Paganism to Christianity, in the time of Constantine; but the glory was prevented by the worldly riches brought into the Church, which issued in corruption and apostasy; and this brought in the papacy, which now stands in the way of Christ's kingdom.

"The seventh seal opened brings in seven angels with seven trumpets to blow, six of which are blown already. The first four brought in the northern nations, viz, the Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c. into the western

empire. These over-ran several countries, entered Italy, sacked and burnt Rome itself, (signified by the burning mountain,) and spread darkness and ignorance over all the empire, (designed by the smiting of the sun, moon and stars;) and this broke it to pieces, and divided it into ten kingdoms,—signified by the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and by the ten horns in Daniel's vision. The fifth trumpet brought in Mahomet and his Saracens, the locusts, and the sixth trumpet the Turks, the four angels loosed at the river Euphrates, into the eastern empire, which set up a kingdom there that still continues. And now, since six of these trumpets have been blown, and the effects have followed predicted by them; why should we not most firmly believe, that the seventh trumpet will be blown, when the mystery of God will be finished; when the kingdoms of this world will become our Lord's; when he will take to himself his great power and reign; when he will destroy them that destroy the earth, and give a reward to his servants, and to all that fear his name: (Rev. x. 7 and xi. 15—18.) *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*"

"And as, by the above events, the *spiritual reign* of Christ will take place in the world, so, by his second coming, the *personal reign* will be introduced and last a thousand years.* For since all things concerning his first advent were so completely fulfilled, what reason have we to doubt, "that he will appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The angels at his ascension assured us he would; the apostle Paul declares he shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel; and he himself has said no less than three times—*Behold I come*

quickly. Let us believe therefore that he will come and make all things new, produce new heavens and a new earth, set up his tabernacle among his people and dwell with them, and they reign with him. *The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*"

By the *zeal* of the Lord we may understand both his indignation against his enemies, (for he puts on zeal as a cloak when he comes to take vengeance on them;) and it may signify his fervent love and zeal of charity towards his people. By the one he is moved to destroy Antichrist, being jealous for his own honour; by the other he is prompted to deliver his friend and to exalt his Son, whose glory he likewise seeks. And being the Lord of hosts, and armies,—the creator of all the hosts of heaven,—he has power to do all this and will assuredly perform.

"What has been said will serve greatly to support the credit of divine revelation. The sacred word will appear from hence to be indeed the word of God, and not the word of men. We may be assured the Scriptures are divinely inspired, and a sure word of prophecy: for what else could have foretold such numbers of events, which have been exactly fulfilled;—particularly what relates to Jews and Papists, who are two living and standing proofs of the truth of the divine revelation, which all the deists in the world are not able to set aside? Likewise, this may serve to encourage our faith, as to the performance of whatever has been spoken by the Lord; for if he performs all things for us in providence, (as he does for particular persons, as Job, David, and others,) then much more may we believe that he will perform all that he has said he will do for Him-

* The defectiveness of the Author's view on the subject of the spiritual reign has already been noticed in the note at page 58.—Ed.

self, for his Son, and for his Church."

"But then, though he has so particularly prophesied of, and so peremptorily promised these things, yet he will be enquired of by his people to do them. We should, therefore, pray continually to him, and give him no rest day nor night until they are accomplished. And for the accomplishment we should quietly wait; for there is an appointed time, and when that comes there will be no tarrying: "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." (Dan. xii. 12.) "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thess. iii. 5.)"

SERMON VI.

PSALM LXXXIV. 2. *The Lord will give grace and glory.*

The only word in this passage I shall insist on is—GLORY; my intention being to treat of the ultimate glory of the saints, which will commence on their departure out of this world and be consummated in the morning of the Resurrection.

I. First may be shown the reality and certainty of such a state.

1. The light of nature and reason affords some proof, in the way of *inference*, that there must be such a state: for example, the universal natural desire of mankind for happiness; for all are in eager pursuit of it, though none are able to find it in natural things; and it is not reasonable to suppose that this desire is implanted in human nature in vain; but that some who hunger for it, even good men, will be satisfied when they awake up in the divine likeness. It may be inferred also from the unequal distribution of things in this life, which makes the providence of God very intricate and perplexed; and they are indeed at-

tended with difficulties which cannot be solved without the supposition of a future state. And it may further be observed, that a general though vague notion of happiness after death has obtained among the wiser heathens, especially among such as have believed in the immortality of the soul.

2. Blessed be God however for "a more sure word of prophecy," which "brings life and immortality to light" (2 Pet. i. 19; 2 Tim. i. 10.) From the Scriptures such a state may be clearly deduced—*First*, from the promises of God to *godliness*; which promises reach not only to this life, but also to that which is to come. (1 Tim. iv. 8.) "And this is the promise he hath promised us, even *eternal life*." 1 John ii. 25; and see also James i. 12.

Secondly, this glory is not only promised but *prepared* even before the foundation of the world. (Matt. xxv. 35 and xx. 23.) And as it is prepared before for the heirs of glory, so are they also prepared before, as vessels of mercy, for the glory. (Acts. xiii. 48.) These, as they certainly believe in Christ in *time*, so shall they assuredly enjoy that life in *eternity* to which they are ordained, (Rom. ix. 23,) the *means* as well as the *end* being fixed and sure; for God hath also chosen them from the beginning. (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14)

Thirdly, the covenant of grace includes and insures a future state of happiness; for which reason it is called the *covenant of life*. (Mal. ii. 5.) The terms of it run—"I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jer. xxxii. 38,) which form of speaking our Lord adduces as a proof of the immortality of the soul and of the resurrection of the body. (Matt. xxii. 31, 32.) The suretyship engagements of Christ in the way of covenant abundantly confirm this; for he came "that we

might have life, and have it more abundantly;" (John x. 10.)—"a more abundant and more excellent life than Adam had in innocence or the angels have in heaven;—a life of glory with himself." He has indeed himself, as the surety and fore-runner for them, already taken possession, insomuch that they in him are said to "sit together in heavenly places." (Eph. ii. 6.)

Fourthly. "The preparations of Christ, and his prayers for the future glory of his people, furnish out an argument not inconsiderable, proving the reality and certainty of it: *In my Father's house*, says Christ, (John xiv. 2, 3), *are many mansions, of peace, joy, bliss and happiness; if it were not so, I would have told you*; which is a strong and invincible proof of the truth we are treating of: *I go to prepare a place for you*; meaning, in the other world, in his Father's house; which though a kingdom prepared from eternity in the will, purpose and design of God, yet required another and fresh preparation by the personal presence and powerful intercession of Christ: *and if I go and prepare a place for you*, as he certainly would and did; *I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also*; of which no doubt is to be made: and his prayers and intercessions are for the same thing, of which we have an instance and example in his intercessory prayer here on earth; *Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*; (John xvii. 24.) and his prayers always were, and ever will be heard."

Fifthly. The effectual vocation of the people of God by the Spirit, to his kingdom and glory;—the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, "which is the earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the

purchased possession;"—and the desires which that Spirit raises in them for the heavenly glory;—are all further assurances of it. See 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 1—8; Ephes. i. 14; Psalm lxxxiii. 24.

"And agreeable to all this it appears to be matter of fact, that good men, as soon as they "depart" hence are immediately "with Christ;"—that those that "die in him" are "from thenceforth blessed," even from the moment of their death, and "rest from their labours;"—and that angels stand round their dying beds waiting to do their office, and to escort the soul, as soon as it is separated from the body, to heavenly bliss. (Phil. i. 23; Rev. xiv. 13; Luke xvi. 22 and xxiii. 43.) So Lazarus when he died was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; and the penitent thief was, on the same day he suffered on the cross, with Christ in paradise.

II. I will now attempt to describe this glorious state; though I confess it is a task fitter for an angel than for a sinful mortal on earth.

1. Let us then observe the images or figures by which the glory is represented.

First, it is represented as a *house*, but such a one as is not to be found any where on earth: a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. v. 1.) This is the house of Christ's Father, in which are many mansions; (John xiv. 2.) and all the apartments of it are "everlasting habitations." And if it is the Father's house, he is not only the builder, but he will dwell in it together with his children.

Secondly, it is called an *inheritance*, even "the inheritance of the saints in *light*,"—and this inheritance infinitely superior to any thing in this world, inasmuch as it is *incorruptible, undefiled, not fading*

away, but *eternal*. 1 Peter i. 4.

It is also likened to a *city*,—"the city which hath foundations, and whose builder and maker is God," (Heb. xi. 10,) signifying to us its glory and durability. For a description of its glory see Rev. xxi. 18—21.

Further, it is called a *kingdom*, in which the saints will be kings;—not merely titular or nominal ones; but they have a *kingdom*—a kingdom also which cannot be moved any more than their city. (Heb. xii. 28.) The promise of it is often expressed by that of a *crown*—"a crown of life," "a crown of righteousness," "a crown of glory that fadeth not away," "an incorruptible crown." (See Rev. ii. 10, 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Pet. v. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 25.) It is also expressed by a *throne*:—See 1 Sam. ii. 8; Rev. iii. 21.

"It is set forth by every thing that is pleasing and grateful to the mind, or striking to the senses; and by such things as exceed all the enjoyments of them in this world. Here the saints will sit down with Christ at his table, and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom; here they will pluck and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which stands in the midst of the paradise of God; that tree of life which bears twelve manner of fruits, yielded every month, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations; here they will drink of the river of divine pleasure, that pure water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; (Luke xxii. 18, 30; Rev. ii. 7 and xxii. 1, 2,) here they will *see* what eye hath not seen, *hear* what the ear hath not heard, and *taste* what hath not entered into the heart of man."* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

3. We may obtain some further knowledge of it by considering what

will be the enjoyment of the saints in it, both in the separate state and after the resurrection. In the separate state it has already been observed, that the soul of a saint is immediately with Christ, and therefore happy from the enjoyment of his presence. And if the presence of Christ to his Church was such, that a day in his courts is counted better than a thousand, (Psalm, lxxxiv. 1, 10,) how great the happiness to be ever with him, in a state where there will be visible communion and no interruption of it any more.

But besides this, there will be conformity to God, without which the happiness of our communion would be defective. *Faith* is now assimilating the saints, and changing them into the same image from glory to glory; (2 Cor. iii. 18;) what then will not the *sight* accomplish?—The great end of predestination, conformity to Christ's image, (Rom. viii. 29,) will then be accomplished; so that the soul in all its powers and faculties will resemble him, and be swallowed up in him: it will have an unclouded discernment of him,—the bias of mind will be wholly towards him,—the will entirely submitted to him,—the affections intensely set upon him,—and nothing irregular or disagreeable in any of its thoughts and motions.

There is converse also in the separate state with angels and with the spirits of just men made perfect. How angels communicate their thoughts to each other we know not; but doubtless they do; and in the same way can communicate and converse with the souls of men, which are spirits like themselves; and these latter also one with another; which must greatly heighten the happiness of this condition.

* In various other places it is spoken of as not yet *seen* or *revealed*. See 2 Cor. iv. 18; Heb. xi. 1; Rom. viii. 18, 24, 25; Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2.

There will also be perfect *knowledge* in the soul—of God and his attributes and works, so far as the creature can be capable of it; of the Son in his person, offices and graces; of the blessed Spirit; of angels; and of each other. Now we know in part, “but then shall we know even as we are known.”* (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) There will also be perfect *holiness*, the soul being entirely free from all taint of sin, as well as from its guilt: and consequently there will be perfect peace, —a peace complete, uninterrupted, everlasting.

Secondly, At the resurrection there will be a *glory* upon the body, as well as upon the soul; that which is sown in corruption being raised in incorruption, and that which is sown in dishonour being raised in glory; (1 Cor. xv. 41—54) it shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ himself, (Phil. iii. 21,) and shine like the sun in the firmament of heaven. It will then be no longer subject to the weakness and weariness and complaints of the *natural* body, for it will be “a *spiritual* body”—not turned into a spirit, for then it would not have flesh and bones as it will have; but it will subsist as spirits do, and be no more subject to die. It will then be no longer an incumbrance to the soul in its spiritual services, but it will aid and assist it.

This state will bring a fresh accession to the happiness and glory previously enjoyed. The beatific vision will be enlarged—for now we walk by faith, but then by sight,

* The Author has apparently confounded some of the things which belong to the *resurrection* state with the *separate* state. With the exception that there is an enjoyment of the presence and vision of Christ, the Scriptures are nearly silent in regard to the latter; and it is in the resurrection that they are made like the angels, and consequently have the faculties of angels. Luke xx. 35, 36; and see Investigator, Vol. I, p. 332. He presently likewise adverts to things as belonging to the resurrection, which he has here anticipated.—Ed.

† See Job xix. 26, 27; 2 Cor. v. 7; Ps. xvii. 15; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2.

‡ Vide Melchior. Adam. vit. Lutheri, p. 154.

and we shall see God even as he is, —yea, in our flesh we shall see God.† We shall see all the holy angels in their shining forms, ranks, orders, —those thrones, dominions, principalities and powers made by and for Christ, and subject to him,—those sons of God, those morning stars, that sang together when the foundation of the earth was laid. We shall also see and know each other in this perfect state. “The question was asked Luther, a little before his death, Whether we should know one another in the other world? to which he answered by observing the case of Adam, who knew Eve to be the flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, whom he had never seen before. “How did he know this, says he?—By the Spirit of God, by revelation. So, added he, shall we know parents, wives, children, in the other world, and that more perfectly. Besides, how did the apostles know Moses and Elias on the mount with Christ, whom they had never seen before, no not any statue, picture, or representation of them, (which were not allowed among the Jews,) but by revelation? so the saints shall know one another in heaven.”‡ How otherwise can those to whom gospel ministers have been the instruments of conversion and edification, be their joy and crown of rejoicing at the last day.”

There then we shall see the first man that was in the world, with Eve, the mother of all living, in a far more exalted state than when in the garden of Eden;—there we

shall see Abel, the first martyr, whose blood was shed in the cause of Christ:—there we shall see Noah, the man that saw two worlds, the world that then was and the world which now is;—there we shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with the other patriarchs, and sit down with them in the kingdom of God; there we shall see Moses, the meekest of men, and David, the man after God's own heart;—there we shall see the evangelic Isaiah, with the rest of his brethren the prophets;—there we shall see John, the forerunner and harbinger of Christ, who was greater than all the prophets;—there we shall see the apostles of our dear Redeemer, and that wondrous man, who was caught up to the third heaven;—and, finally, there we shall see the whole company of martyrs and confessors that have lived in all ages:—the general assembly and Church of the first born whose names are written in heaven. These are delivered now from all outward evils, as well as inward: the wicked have now ceased from troubling them; there is no pricking briar or thorn; nothing which offends or does ini-

quity; but they will pass an eternity in blessed communion and spiritual converse, and in praising the Lord for all the benefits of his grace and goodness.

O see that you are *now* of the number of these.—They are the elect of God, the redeemed of the Lamb, the Church which he has purchased with his own blood;—they are such as are called of God with an high, a holy, a heavenly calling;—they are those who have truly and spiritually known Christ, and believed on him unto everlasting life. All who have heard this discourse have doubtless been desirous of the glory spoken of; O see that you are first made partakers of this grace: grace is the first gift of God, glory is his last. And you that *have* grace, see that you ascribe all to the praise and glory of God;—and whilst you are looking for the glory to be revealed, consider “what manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness,—and be diligent, that we may be found of Christ in peace, without spot and blameless.” (2 Pet. iii. 11, 14.)

ON THE LITERAL CHARACTER OF THE THOUSAND YEARS.

(From Dr. Sayer Rudd, on the Millennium.)

Another thing inclining me to believe that the thousand years of Rev. xx. 4 are *literal*, and not *prophetical*, is, that I apprehend these thousand years bear the same proportion to the *seventh day*, upon which God rested from all his works,

as the several preceding ages of the world bear to the *six days of creation*; and consequently that they are of the same nature or kind.* What I mean, in other words, is this: that as the six days employed in the creation were representative

* The Author has already treated, under five different heads, that the 1000 years are to be understood literally: this is the fifth line of argument, and is given to the Reader as containing some curious information. His argument is to shew that the years are *not* to be understood prophetically, as a day for a year; neither indefinitely, as signifying *any* considerable period.—Ed.

of 6000 years, during which the church was to continue in a state of imperfection; so the seventh day, or sabbath, was an emblem of a seventh millennium, which the raised saints should enjoy with Christ in the new heavens and new earth.

I. The great difficulty here, before this argument can be of service, is to make it, at least, probable, that there is this proportion or analogy between the things above mentioned; that is to say, that the six first days of the world and the sabbath ensuing answer to the continuance of the church for 6000 years in this world, and a seventh in "the world to come," or resurrection state. In order to this I offer the following considerations:—

1st. That it is not unusual to find the different postures of the church of Christ, both with respect to worship and circumstance in the world, represented in Scripture by different similitudes and dispensations of providence. Who does not know that Hagar, the servant of Sarah, and Sinai, a mountain in Arabia, were types of the legal institution? Again, is it not equally certain that Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and Sion, a mountain in Jerusalem, were typical of the gospel state or covenant of grace?^a Nay, we are told that the whole Levitical institution was made up of shadows, the substance of which are to be found in Christ only.^b So if we come to the different dispensations of divine providence towards the church, we shall easily believe that they also have a typical reference. Thus the captivity and bondage of the Israelites in Egypt was certainly a type of that bondage which the church was to groan under during the reign of antichrist: for which reason the antichristian empire is called by the name of *Egypt*. The same may be observed

with respect to their captivity in Babylon; which likewise was a figure of the captivity of the church under "the man of sin;" and therefore the papacy is called "the city of *Babylon*."^c So on the contrary, the deliverance of the children of Israel from both these places of servitude, and their entering into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, are undoubtedly types of the peace, prosperity and glory of the church, first in the *spiritual*, and then in the *personal* branch of Christ's reign.

What I have above observed, will, I hope, have this good effect upon the Reader; that it will remove any prejudices he will have contracted against *types* in general, and make him willing to receive what may be pretended in this way from the creation. As it is certain there is a variety of types up and down in the Scriptures, how are we sure that something of this kind may not be designed in the works of the six days and the sabbath ensuing? At least, is it not worth our while, when any thing of that nature is proposed, to attend to the subject, and examine the argument with candor? If some particulars, some individuals of creation as well as providence, (which none dispute,) are singled out and made typical, who knows but, upon a nicer disquisition, the *whole* of it may be found of that kind likewise.

2ndly. Especially may there be reason for such a supposition, when I shall have added,—that it is not with God, the creator and disposer of all things, as it is with us poor finite creatures. We know only what is before us, or, at most, what is past; whereas it is said of the Lord, that he "declares the end from the beginning."^d His infinite all-comprehensive mind called every

^a Gal. iv. 24, &c.

^b Col. ii. 17.

^c Rev. xiv. 8, &c.

^d Isa. xlv. 10.

thing up, and presented the things that should be, as well as all possible things, at once to his view; and therefore, we may suppose, it could not be difficult with the divine majesty, to make his first works a model or platform of all that should succeed. How easy must it have been with the all-wise and all-powerful Being, he who knows all things from the end to the beginning, to make the natural or sensible world an emblem of the rational or intellectual;—to contrive, both for matter and time, his first works in such a way, as that they should exhibit, in miniature the several grand events relating to the world and church, together with the several periods in which they should turn up. Nay, give me leave to ask yet further, whether is not such a design, such a view of the creation, perfectly worthy the divine Being, and every way suited to the glory of his unsearchable wisdom?

3rdly. It is generally allowed, that there is something mysterious and sacred in the number *seven*. It is confessed on all hands to be an emblem or figure of perfection; which is, very probably, the reason why we meet with it so often in Scripture: as in the five books of Moses, where we read, that the *seventh* day is holy, and the *seventh* was the year of rest, and that *seven times seven* was the great jubilee; that the living creatures entered into the ark by *sevens*, that the first born of every beast remained *seven* days with its dam, that the male children were to be *seven* days old before they were circumcised, that the candlestick of the tabernacle had *seven* lamps, that a woman after her uncleanness, and a leper after his being cured, were to be purified for *seven* days. But I should recite to you not only a great part of the Pentateuch, but indeed of the Old Testa-

ment, were I to give you all the examples of this kind that are to be met with. Look we into the New Testament, and we shall find the use of it almost as common, especially in the Revelation. How frequently does this number occur there? We read of *seven* churches, *seven* stars, *seven* candlesticks, *seven* spirits, *seven* lamps, *seven* eyes, *seven* horns of the lamb, *seven* seals, *seven* plagues, *seven* trumpets, *seven* thunders and *seven* vials. Now, why is all this? What can we suppose the reason of it? Who is not convinced from hence that the number *seven* signifies completion and perfection? And of what can it signify the completion, if not of the greatest of God's works, for which all his other were wrought; I mean, **THE CHURCH**? If then the number *seven* be every where sacred, why not the *seventh* period of the world, reckoning from the creation? Is it said the number *seven* is sacred because the *seventh* day was consecrated to the service of God? The demand will then be, but why has God chosen the *seventh* day to be holy, and a day of rest for man? Is it not plainly to signify, that the seventh day, or seventh period of the church, shall be a time of perfect holiness and peace?

To this it will be returned,—the seventh day was consecrated to rest and holiness, because God created the world in *six* days and rested upon the *seventh*. Nothing could be more to the purpose; this indeed is the spring head; higher than this we cannot go. But here also an excellent type of the seventh period presents itself. For now the question is, *wherefore* did God create the world in *six* days and rest upon the *seventh*? Why did he not employ *five*, *eight*, *ten*, or *twelve* days upon this account, but precisely *seven*? Certainly the Lord had some admirable design in this: He who is

infinite in wisdom, could not do any thing without some good reason. And what can more probably be offered than this: namely, that he created the world in six days and rested upon the seventh, because he intended to keep the church in a state of imperfection, during the first six periods, and then bring it to complete rest, tranquillity and happiness in the seventh and last? He took up such a number of days in forming and completing the sensible or material world, that so it might be an image or type of the several *degrees or periods* through which his church was to pass, before it could reach the perfection for which he designed it.

II. I subjoin, what is here pretended has been the opinion of some of the most learned among the ancients, the Jews especially: they have had the same view of the creation, and have drawn the same conclusions from it. The tradition of Elias a Jewish doctor is very ancient, and well known among divines; which is,* “That the world should stand six thousand years; two thousand void, two thousand under the law, and two thousand the days of the Messiah.”† By the *world* he here intends the present system of things, or the *world* under the disadvantage of the fall. For

the continuance of this under *three* grand periods he allots six thousand years, answerable to the six days of creation.‡ As to the *seventh* millennium, though there be no mention of it here, it appears from a foregoing place in the same Gemara Talmudica, that Elias was of opinion it answered to the *sabbath*, and was to commence with the particular resurrection of the just, and the renovation of the world. His words are these: “The Just whom God shall raise up (in the first resurrection) shall not be turned again to dust. Now if you ask, How shall it be with the just in those *thousand years*, wherein the holy blessed God shall renew this world?—you must know, that the holy blessed God will give them the wings as it were of eagles,^b &c.”

After this I cannot but take notice of the author of Cespeh Mishna, who in his notes on Maimonides is very particular, and expresses himself thus: “At the end of the world will be the day of judgment, and the resurrection of the dead, and after that *the world to come*. These things, (adds he,) are intimated to us by the six days’ work: upon the sixth day Adam was created, and perfected on the seventh; so the kings of the nations of the world shall continue 5000 years, answer-

* Rabbi Elias lived under the second temple, near the beginning of the Grecian Monarchy; so that it is not a device of any modern Rabbies, but a tradition anciently received among the Jews, while they were the church of God.

† Gemar. Babyl. Sanhed. fol. 97, col. 1. And Avoda Zara fol. 9. c. 1.

‡ Whatever was the original of this division, the Jews account for it in a cabalistical way. Baal Hatturim observes thus concerning it: “There are six Millenniums in the first verse of the first of Genesis, answerable to the 6000 years for which the world is to continue.” And having, as we may suppose, reference to this tradition of Elias, he afterwards mentions such verses as point at his grand distribution of time. “Accordingly, (says he,) in this verse, *and the earth was without form and void*, are two Millenniums, answering to the 2000 years that were to be void. In that verse, *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old*, there are two Millenniums, answering to the 2000 under the law. And in that verse, *God said let there be light and there was light*, are four Millenniums, answering to the 4000 years under the law, and in the days of the Messiah.” On Gen. 1. 1.

^b Fol. 92, c. 2.

able to the five days on which the fowls and creeping things were created; and the possessing of their kingdoms will be a little within the sixth millennium, answering to the creation of the beasts and cattle which were created at the beginning of the sixth day; and the kingdom of the house of *David* in the sixth thousand, answerable to the creation of *Adam*, who knew his creator and ruled over them all: and at the end of that thousand will be the day of judgment, answering to *Adam's* being judged at the end of it, i. e. *the sixth day*. And the seventh will be the sabbath. This is the beginning of the world to come. And the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee intend the same thing."ⁱ

Rabbi Gedaliah has these words to our purpose: "At the end of 6000 years the world shall return to its old state, without form and void; (which is meant of the conflagration;) and after that it shall wholly become a sabbath."^k

Rabbi Moses Bar Nachman observes, from a tradition of the ancient Jews, "that the present world will conclude with the days of the Messiah; and that at the end of them will be the judgment and resurrection of the dead, which is the world to come." Here, by the days of the Messiah, he means, the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah in the present world under the last two thousand years of it; because he affirms, that the kingdom of the house of *David* is to conclude with the sixth thousand; that the day of judgment follows thereupon; and that the world to come begins with the seventh millennium.^l

If we consult them respecting the days of the Messiah, (i. e. according

to us, the reign of Christ in the new heavens and new earth,) we shall find, that they give into the thousand years, literally understood. This appears not only by what we before observed from Rabbi Elias; but likewise from the marginal gloss upon that passage; and more particularly from Cocceius's edition.^m Aruch also mentions it as a matter of unquestionable authority, or as what was generally received and entertained among the Jews.ⁿ And so says Rabbi Eliezer: "The days of the Messiah are a thousand years."^o

It were easy to multiply testimonies of this kind, from the Rabbies; but because I would not burden the Reader, I content myself with transcribing these, and refer the curious this way to Mede^p and Whitby^q for more.

But though I decline enumerating authorities of this sort, let none think the Jews were singular in their opinions on this head. Several of the primitive fathers, those especially who favoured the Millennium, have delivered it as part of their faith, that the world should continue, and the church labour in it 6000 years, and that the seventh thousand should be the day of judgment and a sabbath, in which the saints should reign with Christ upon earth. Thus Irenæus: "In as many days as this world was made, in so many millenniums will it be consummated: for as much therefore as all things were finished in six days; and as a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, so the seventh Millennium will bring the consummation of all things."^r

Justin Martyr without doubt was of this opinion, when he says in his dialogue with Trypho: "We know

ⁱ Hilck. Teshuva. cap. 2. § 2.

^k Shal. Hakkabal. fol. 36, c. 1.

^l In Torah

Hadaam. c. 30. f. 105. vid. Grellet. in loc. p. 211, &c. ^m P. 371. ⁿ In voc. קדש.

^o In Midr. Till. f. 4. c. 2. ^p B. 5. p. 893. ^q Annotat. upon Heb. 4, 9. p. 535.

^r Lib. 5. c. 28.

those words (of St. Peter) *a day with the Lord is as a thousand years*, point this way."^r

Cyprian likewise expresses himself thus: "The first seven days, according to the divine disposal, contain seven thousand years, as the true consummation of all things."^s

Lactantius is more large upon this subject, having these expressions: "Let the philosophers know, who reckon so many millenary ages from the beginning of the world, that the *sixth millennium* is not yet concluded. When that is run out, a consummation must necessarily follow, and the world be put into a better condition." Afterwards, arguing upon the same principles as Irenæus, he says: "Forasmuch then as the works of God were completed in six days, the world will continue in its present form six ages, (i. e. six *millenniums* :) for the great day of the Lord is bounded by the revolution of a thousand years." And again more fully: "As God laboured six days in the production of this wonderful system, so religion and truth will suffer six thousand years."—"Because, having finished his works, he rested on the seventh day, and blessed it, it must needs be, that all malice should be rooted out of the earth upon the close of the sixth millennium, and that righteousness should triumph a thousand years."^t

We see then from hence, what were the sentiments of the ancients on this head: and though there be no absolute proof in authorities of this kind, forasmuch as the wisest and best of men are fallible; yet I believe they challenge so much interest in us, that we dare not hastily recede from them; but observing how much their sentiments comport with facts, or things themselves,

we must allow they have an additional weight in the argument.

III. [The Author then proceeds to argue, that the distinguishing *periods of the Church* fall under such a division as favours the analogy; to which he considers it no sufficient objection that those periods are of unequal length, and do not correspond by being terms of 1000 years each: as (1) from Adam to Abraham 2009 years; (2) from Abraham to Moses 500 years; (3) from Moses to the perfection of the Levitical state, 500 years; (4) from the height of the Jewish church to the incarnation of Christ, A. M. 4004; (5) from the birth of Christ to the rise of popery and mahometanism, which, he says, falls upon the close of the fifth millennium; (6) thence to the end of the spiritual reign, i. e. to the second coming of Christ, which is to close the sixth millennium; (7) to the end of the millennium. He then concludes,—]

"I shall have done with this head, when I have further observed, that there seems to be something worthy our notice in God's having brought the legal state to perfection upon the close of the third millennium. Lightfoot has this remark upon it: "Now it thus falling out, that Solomon's temple was finished and perfected in the year of the world 3000, this belike hath helped to strengthen that opinion that hath been taken up by some, that as the world was six days in erecting, so it shall be six thousand years in continuance, and then shall come the everlasting sabbath. And indeed (adds he) the observation could not but please those that were pleased with this opinion: For when they found that the first three thousand years of the world did end in the perfecting the *earthly* temple, it would make them

^r Ed. Paris, p. 308.

^s De Exhortat. Martyr.

^t Instit. Divinar. lib. 7. c. 14.

to conclude the bolder, that the other three thousand should conclude in the consummation of the *spiritual*."v One may perceive, though the Dr. condescends to make this observation, that he speaks with his usual disgust against the millenaries: but if the legal temple be *typical* of the spiritual, as it certainly is, I am at a loss to know how any unprejudiced person could avoid such a conclusion.

Mr. Bedford, in settling the different ages of the world, proposes this method: "First, says he, I suppose, that at the end of two thousand years Noah died, who was the father of the new world, and was immediately succeeded by the birth of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Secondly, that the six days of labour may represent a state of labour and trouble to the church of God, for six thousand years; and as the first three thousand years did end in the perfecting of the material legal temple built by Solomon; so the other three thousand years will end in the perfecting of the spiritual evangelical temple, of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone. Or thus, two thousand years before the birth of him, to whom the promise of the Messiah was given; two thousand years before the birth of the Messiah, in whom the promises were fulfilled; and under him two thousand years of labour and trouble, answering to the six days of the

week; and one thousand years of peace and rest, answering to the seventh day, or sabbath."w

IV. [Another and somewhat imaginative head follows, in which the Author endeavours to trace a correspondence in the *events* of these six periods of the world with the respective works of the *six first days of creation*. The following is a sum of it.—

First day, the creation of *light*: first period the breaking out of light to the church in that promise to the woman, Gen. iii. 15. *Second day*, the waters divided by a firmament: second period, the calling out and separating the family of Abraham from the people, of which waters are a type; the first period being a chaos in which all families good and bad were blended together.* *Third day*, the separation of the waters completed, and the creation of *plants*: the Jewish *nation* gathered together by Moses, and claimed by the Lord as a peculiar people. The dry land he now takes to be an emblem of the Jewish church, in contradistinction to the waters, or Gentiles, which are drawn off; and the earth thus appearing brings forth grass, and herb, and tree, yielding seed and fruit, which is further typical of the *fruitfulness* of the church. "It appearing from hence, (says the Author) that the works of the third day, in their typical reference, give us a view of the

v Vol. I. p. 385, 386.

w Scripture Chronolog. B. 2. c. 6

* On this period the Author has the following remarks: "It must be observed, that as the work of this second day was *imperfect*, so the division answering to it was likewise partial: though God *began* a separation in Abraham and his family, it was not completed till his descendants became a great people, and were the only national church in the world. And therefore it is very remarkable, that there is *no benediction* annexed to the *second day*; the reason of which is, because God had not yet finished his work. However, forasmuch as God designed Abraham and the families of the patriarchs (inconsiderable as they are for number,) an eminent figure in the history of the church, he was pleased to take a whole day in making the expansion and separating the waters above the firmament from those below it. This I hope will, in some measure, satisfy those who have been ready to wonder that this day was employed to no other purposes."

church as perfectly separated from the world, and completely beautiful in her state; it is no wonder to find *two benedictions* accompany this day, viz. that those words, "*and God saw that it was good,*" should be repeated twice,—once on the *complete* separation of the waters, and once on the clothing the earth with herbage and fruit." *Fourth* day, God made two *great lights*, and the stars also; corresponding with the appearing of "the *Sun* of righteousness," Christ Jesus, the Church as the *moon*, and his ministers and followers as *stars*. *Fifth* day, "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." (Gen. i. 20.) The coming into existence of the *fish* and the *fowl*, he compares to the springing up of the whole *Antichristian hierarchy*; because as the waters brought forth the fowl, the papal beast rose out of the *sea*; (Rev. xiii. 1) and Satan is the prince of the power of the *air*. (Ephes ii. 2.)

Sixth day, the creation of *insects*, *creeping things*, *four-footed beasts*. The creeping things, in which he specially mentions *serpents*, and the quadrupeds, comprehending in them lions, leopards, bears, &c. he considers as farther representing the antichristian faction; but that faction in its consummation of wickedness. "For the church (he says) has not yet felt the utmost of their violence. There is still more behind to fear from them. It is true we cannot at present pretend to describe in what particular instances she has to suffer; but this we know, that when things begin to draw to a crisis, the devil, because his time is

but short, will come down with great fury (Rev. xii. 12) and stir up his instruments to the utmost; and then we shall see what monsters of iniquity—what blood thirsty creatures they are." He thinks that this will probably be effected by a junction of the *Mahometan* power with the *Roman Catholic*; and that this is typified by the *frogs* coming out of the mouth of the *dragon*, *beast*, and *false prophet*." "Certain it is (he continues) that the *latter days*, or days immediately preceding the deliverance of the church from all her avowed enemies, will be a time of great tribulation, 'such as never was since there was a nation.' (Dan. xii. 1.) If the Papacy in the West will make considerable efforts to preserve *that life which remains* in some of its branches, after *the body of the beast is destroyed*; (Dan. vii. 11, 12)—I mean, if, after *A REVOLUTION IN FRANCE** (which I take for the *body* of the Papal beast,) the *other* kingdoms in the papal interest will not give up without the hazard of a war, (though it must in the issue fall heaviest on themselves;) no more, we may be sure, will the *Turk* suffer the land of Canaan to be taken from him and quietly possessed by the Jews; &c."

The creation of *Adam* in the latter part of this day he takes to be emblematical of judgment being given to the saints, and the *beasts* being now brought into subjection to the *second* Adam, as they were in the first instance to the *first* Adam. And the creation of the woman and her union with the man, is a type of the marriage of Christ with his church at that period, who is the bride: and for them "there remaineth a sabbath of glory and peace;—viz. the seventh millennium."]

* This was published in 1734, more than half a century before the breaking out of the French revolution; but his view seems borrowed from Jurieu, to whom he acknowledges himself in some things indebted.—Ed.

Original Essays.

INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

CHAPTER II. CONTINUED.

The Church in Pergamos.

Verse 12. It has been before observed that the characteristics of Christ, with which the two forgoing epistles were introduced, may be considered as having the precedence given to them on account of their peculiar suitability to the suffering state in which the Churches were placed at the time the Apocalypse was written. In the next epistle, addressed to the Church in Pergamos, our Lord appears to reveal himself in his most important character, or in reference to his essential and divine nature, as the personal "WORD OF GOD." It thus commences: "*To the Angel of the Church of Pergamos write ; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges ;*" which description refers to Chap. i. 16 : where it is said, " Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword ;" and it is under this title of the Word of God, (compared by the Apostle Paul to a sharp two-edged sword,) that St. John describes him, when he lays the foundation of the gospel of our salvation, by asserting his divine nature ; " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.— All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made ;" this name implying, that as it is by our words alone that we can make ourselves known to others, so it is the peculiar office of the second person in the Trinity, to make known the things of God. The symbol therefore describes " Christ, the power of

God, and the wisdom of God," as the revealer of his will or law ; one jot or one tittle of which shall in no wise pass away till all be fulfilled. It is of the same " word of God" or " personal wisdom" that, according to the opinion of our most esteemed divines, it is said, " The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.—When he prepared the heavens I was there : when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, —then I was by him,—rejoicing always before him, and my delights were with the sons of men." (Prov. viii. 22—31.)

This Word is the salvation of his people, but the condemnation of his enemies : a savour of life unto life, and of death unto death ; like the cloudy pillar which conducted the Israelites, and was a guiding light to them, but terrific darkness to the Egyptians. Christ as the Word of God is the life of the world, for the words that he speaks, they are spirit, and they are life. This character of the Word of God, as being the word of life, was more particularly manifested at his first coming, which was to save and not to condemn ; but at his second coming, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel, he will be revealed as the Word of God in its condemning power, and in the manifestation of his righteous law, which demands the destruction of

transgressors; for then out of the mouth of him "whose name is called the Word of God," it is said, "shall go forth" a sharp two-edged sword, with which he shall smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 13—15.)

In the body of this epistle, after the usual declaration, that Christ *knows their works*, this church is commended for having valiantly maintained his testimony, *holding fast his name and not denying his faith*, though dwelling in the midst of a city, which having been the capital of an ancient kingdom of Asia, and the seat of the kings of the line of Attalus, was celebrated for its literature and its libertinism, its philosophy, and its magnificence; and might therefore be considered as one of the principal seats of Satan, a term we find in Chap. xiii. 2 applied to pagan Rome, as the metropolis of the whole empire and the chief seat of its idolatry. Particular reference is also made to their constancy, as manifested in those days, wherein Antipas (probably their pastor) as a *faithful martyr* of Christ, was slain before their eyes; and then reference is again made to Pergamos being peculiarly *the dwelling place of Satan*; shewing that Christ estimates the value of our testimony in his cause, in proportion to the difficulties of our situation.

Verses 14, 15. Christ had however a few things for which to reprehend them: for they had, it would appear, suffered in some degree from their close contact with the Pagans; and there were amongst them those who seduced the people of God to become partakers in idolatrous and licentious rites, *eating things offered unto idols, and committing fornica-*

tion; and who thus imitated Balaam, who, instructed by Balaam, laid snares for the children of Israel, and seduced them from their allegiance to God; and these dissolute principles had found their way into the very Church itself, under the new form of the licentious doctrines of the *Nicolaitanes*; of which Christ expresses his hate and utter abhorrence.

Verse 16. Being thus found guilty, in this matter of contamination from the gentiles by whom they were surrounded, (from which fault the Ephesian Church had kept themselves clean,) our Lord calls upon them to *repent*; and declares, with reference to the character under which he reveals himself to this particular Church, as "the word of God," that otherwise, having *taken part* with his enemies, they shall be *treated* like them; and that "*coming upon them quickly*," and unexpectedly, as hereafter upon the world at large, *he would fight against them with the sword of his mouth*.

Here it may well become us, as a protestant nation, to ask ourselves—What can such as we expect, favored as we have been above all the other nations of the earth, if we continue to amalgamate ourselves with the Papacy which Christ "*hates*," and which—in reference to the scripture names given to the heathen idols, the abomination of the Ammonites, and the abomination of the Moabites, &c.—is called in Dan. xi. 31, and xii. 11, "the abomination that maketh desolation;" and in a subsequent part of this revelation it is called, "the Mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth." Her followers are also in Rev. xi. 2, represented as the idolatrous "*Gentiles*" of the present day; who amongst their other grievous errors are justly chargeable with this, that whenever circumstances have re-

commended such a policy, they have always been ready, like the offenders of the Church of Pergamos, to found their superstitious and worldly practices upon the former rites of Paganism.—What indeed can be looked for by us but that we shall be made partakers of their punishment, upon whose account it is declared that the whole Roman empire is already devoted to destruction? Dan. vii. 11.

Verse 17. In the promise made by the Spirit to those who should overcome, that it should be given to them to eat of the hidden manna, reference is made to the saving and sustaining power of the Word of God, agreeably to Christ's own declaration, "that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" and "that he is that living bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world; whereof whosoever eateth shall not die."—Of this the manna, the support of the ancient Church in their passage through the wilderness, was but a figure.

The epithet "hidden" may be supposed to have reference to that pot of manna which was by the express direction of God hidden, or laid up, by Aaron in the ark, (in itself a type of Christ,) and was thus kept in the holy of holies, the place of the immediate presence of God, and a type of the heavenly state. And as Christ, when he offered himself as the life of the world, said, "he that eateth me shall live by me;" so when he holds it forth as a reward to the suffering saints of the church of Pergamos, that in a future and eternal world they should eat of this hidden manna,—being himself the Word of God, that incorruptible manna, that true bread from heaven,—he promises to give *himself* for ever to them as the

source of their spiritual life; of which reward the faithful of the church of Ephesus received a like assurance under the equivalent figure of their eating of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

The farther promise of a *white stone* has reference to the method employed in the Areopagus, the great judicial tribunal of the Athenians, of deciding on the acquittal or condemnation of an individual by collecting the votes of the judges in an urn appointed for that purpose; the white stone denoting the acquittal, and the black stone the condemnation of the accused; and it implies that the Church, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—and having thus been enabled, while living, to adopt the triumphant language of the Apostle: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?"—shall in eternity be acquitted from any charge of guilt that Satan may bring against them. Agreeably to this animating assurance we find, that the martyred saints of the Church of Pergamos (who are here promised such acquittal,) and those of the Church of Thyatira, (to whom it is expressly promised that they shall rule the nations with a rod of iron,) together with all those of the other Churches who had suffered during the period of pagan persecution, are thus represented in Rev. xii, when their warfare had been accomplished, as successfully repelling the accusations brought against them by Satan in the court of heaven. "And the Dragon," it is said, "that old serpent, called the devil and satan, that deceiveth the whole world, stood before the woman that was ready to be delivered," (viz. before the Church of

Christ on earth, considered in her collective capacity) "for to devour her child as soon as it was born; and she brought forth a man child," (viz. the members of the same Church, considered in their individual capacity,) who was from another world, to rule "all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.— And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night; and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The new name written upon the white stone refers to the custom of giving new names when new connexions are formed, or new situations in life are entered into; as when a slave was made free, and adopted into the family of his master; or as the names of Abraham and Jacob were changed when God brought them into covenant with himself; and as Nebuchadnezzar changed the names of Daniel and his three companions in captivity when he received them into his service; or as, with us, a woman upon that principal change in her situation, her marriage, assumes the name of her husband. A still more appropriate prophetic illustration may be found in the change which took place, by divine command, in the commencement of the year from about the time of the autumnal to that of the vernal equinox; (see Exod. xii. 2;) when the ancient church, delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and saved from death by the blood of the paschal Lamb, entered into the new legal dispensation of types and ceremonies, preparatory to

the introduction of the brighter light of the Gospel dispensation; and also by the change which was subsequently made in the commencement of the week, and in the sabbath day, on a corresponding occasion and crisis of time, when the Church by the sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb experienced a greater deliverance, and entered into the new Gentile dispensation, the former Jewish dispensation passing away; and when a change was also at the same time made in the form of the rite intended to represent alike under each dispensation the sacrifice and death of Christ: which latter dispensation to the Church,—of limited extent, with inward light, and external humiliation,—is itself but preparatory to the future dispensation of her universal extent, exaltation and power.

I have already observed that the fulfilment of the promises made by the Spirit to the faithful of the several Churches, who should overcome in their arduous contest, is deferred to a period which follows the announcement of Rev. xi. 15—18, "that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," and that "the time is come that he should give reward to his servants the prophets and to the saints." And at the battle at Armageddon, which occurs shortly after this announcement,—Christ having taken to himself his great power, and the kingdoms of the world having become his—we find that he reveals himself in the same character as he does to the Church in Pergamos, as the divine and eternal "Word of God," combined, as in this epistle, with his then *newly* assumed regal character; for it is said, that on his "head were many crowns," and it is then further added, that he hath *a name written that no man knew but he himself*;

and in verse 16 it is again repeated, "he hath on his vesture and on his thigh *a name written*, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." The "*new name*" therefore "*written*" of Rev. II. 17, "*which no man knows saving he that receiveth it*" and which is to be bestowed on the glorified saints of the Church of Pergamos when the time shall arrive appointed for them to receive their reward, is obviously *the new regal name of Christ* which it is said *no man knew but he himself*. This is assumed by him, when, the dispensation of humiliation being terminated, a new one commences, of the privileges and glories of which those who have suffered with him and in his cause shall partake, when he shall come the second time in his divine power as the Word of God, shall put on zeal as a cloak, and array himself with his regal character as with a vesture, and shall write this "*new name*" upon his thigh, as being the principal seat of strength;* and the armies of the saints which are in heaven shall follow him partaking of his conquests, triumphs, and regal glories, which is in effect partaking of his *new name*. This view of the new name written, as being Christ's *regal* name, is confirmed by the fact, that when Christ subsequently manifests himself to the Church in Philadelphia, as he that "hath the key of David," or as having the regal administration committed unto him, the appropriate promise made by the Spirit at the conclusion of the epistle to the saints of that Church who shall overcome is, that Christ shall write upon them his "*new name*."

The complete promise therefore made to the saints of the Church of Pergamos, that they shall receive a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man know-

eth save he that receiveth it, is,—that being, by the meritorious righteousness of Christ imputed to them, absolved from all condemnation, when he shall come in that glory of the Father which is essential to his character as the divine Word, and which he had with the Father before the world was, they also shall appear with him arrayed in his righteousness, and made partakers of his regal character. (See Rev. XIX.)

By the regal name being thus represented as "*written*," we may consider to be meant, that it is so assumed by Christ and his saints, as never again to be obliterated, annulled or relinquished. So the Apostle proclaims in reference to the exaltation of Christ by his resurrection from the dead; "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him." Dan. II. 44, speaking of the setting up the kingdom of the saints, in the last days of the Roman Empire, agrees with the testimony thus given by St. John; for it calls it "a kingdom that shall never be destroyed;"—so likewise Dan. VII. 13, 14.

The statement that no one knows this new name but he that receiveth it; and that no man knew the name which Christ had written but he himself; while at the same time the apostle saw it "*written*" on his vesture and on his thigh; must be understood as meaning, that no one can know so as sufficiently to estimate, or can appreciate except by experience, the greatness of the regal glories of Christ as the divine Word, in which the saints shall participate; or in the words of St. Paul, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" which can only be

* Thus it is said in the Psalms "the Lord taketh not pleasure in the *legs*," that is in the *power* or strength of man.

understood as they are revealed by the Spirit.

On comparing this epistle, which so magnifies and sets forth the attributes of the Redeemer, with the two which we have previously examined, we find in all, the same encouragement to the faithful;—the same connexion maintained between the three several distinct portions of which they consist, (viz. the revelation of Christ, the address and the promise of reward;)—and the same reference made throughout the whole of them to the introductory vision of Chap. i. and again to the rewards described in the last four chapters of the Apocalypse, as to be bestowed upon the glorified spirits of the saints during the last dispensation, which takes place in time, and is to be enjoyed when that be past throughout the countless ages of eternity.

The Church in Thyatira.

Verse 18. Thyatira was a considerable city of Asia Minor, mentioned in Acts xvi. 14 as the residence of Lydia. Christ here appears to reveal himself especially in reference to his human nature as "the only begotten Son of God," the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. It thus commences,—

"And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God." On referring to chap. i. whence all these introductory portions of the epistles are taken, we find a variation between the two titles of our Lord, as respectively given in each; for in the vision, (chap. i. 13,) he is described, not as "the Son of God," but as "one like unto the Son of Man." This interchange of terms is highly significant, and intimates the entire union of the two characters mentioned; implying here the oneness of the person of the Lord

Jesus Christ as "the Son of God," and as "the Son of Man." A remarkable instance of the same kind occurs in Rev. v. 6 and 7. St. John hears it announced by one of the elders, that "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David," hath prevailed to open the book; he looks, and beholds "a Lamb, as it had been slain," who takes the book and opens the seven seals thereof. This circumstance most obviously and naturally denotes the union of the regal and priestly offices in the same person of Christ.

The terms "Son of man," and "Son of God," both, as it appears to me, here describe Christ in reference to his assumed human nature and mediatorial character; as we find them blended together in the annunciation of his future birth into this world, made to the virgin Mary; which also states, on the authority of the heavenly messenger, the grounds upon which the title of "the Son of God," as well as that of "the Son of man," and the name of Jesus, are given to him. "He shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David."—"And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—"Thou shalt call his name Jesus (or Saviour,) for he shall save his people from their sins." It seems therefore most agreeable to scriptural phraseology, to which on all occasions we cannot too closely adhere, to speak of Christ, in reference to his essential and divine nature, as the Word, or Wisdom of God; but in reference to his assumed human nature and mediatorial character, as "Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God," or else "the Son of man;" for these latter terms are

interchangeable, and equally describe Christ in the full glories of his mediatorial character; the latter term, "the Son of man" being employed equally with the former, "the Son of God," even when his pre-existence and his omnipresence (attributes and perfections derived alone from his divine nature,) are spoken of. Thus he describes himself, as "he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man which is in heaven."

The first characteristic under which Christ makes himself known to this Church viz., as having "his eyes like unto a flame of fire," refers to the similar description chap. i. 14. Christ is here revealed as having "all judgment committed unto him, because he is the son of man." This also is an attribute derived only from his divine nature, according to the declaration made by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, "I the Lord search the hearts, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." So also St. Paul, speaking of the divine Word, says, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" and when on earth "He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man."

The second characteristic of Christ here introduced—viz. that his feet are "*like fine brass*,"—corresponds with the description chap. i. 15, that his feet were "like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." The same description is given of the Cherubim, or church in heaven, in Ezekiel, chap. i. 7, where it is said, "their feet were straight feet, the

'sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot, and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.'" This symbol, borrowed as in so many other instances from the animal creation, alludes to the fact that the feet of animals are their chief instruments of labour, as their horns are their great instruments of power. A similar reference to the feet of animals, as instruments of labour, occurs in the prophecy of Isaiah, where a blessing is pronounced upon the missionary labours of the church on earth in these terms; "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." And the same figure, of referring to the feet of animals, is used by the apostle Paul, when, in speaking of the ministerial labours of the church on earth, he explains the hidden meaning of the precept of the ceremonial law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." The power with which the Jews should subdue and bring their enemies under their feet, is also predicted by the prophet Micah, using the same figure of thrashing by the feet of oxen, whose hoofs were strengthened by shoes of brass; "Arise, and thrash, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass." And as part of the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the tribe of Asher before his death it is said, "thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." (Deut. xxxiii. 25.) By the feet of the ministers of the church on earth, who bring the glad tidings of salvation, being compared to those of the ox and of the ass; and again, by the feet of the tribes of Israel being spoken of as made *iron* and *brass*; is implied the vigour, energy, and persevering character of their laborious exer-

tions; and this is also the meaning of the same characteristic as found in the symbol of the Cherubim, or church in heaven, as appears from their feet of brass being the feet of oxen. When therefore our Lord here reveals himself as having his feet like unto fine brass,—or as, in the vision seen by Daniel, chap. x. 6, when he appeared having both “his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass,” (the arms being the principal instruments of labour with man, as the feet are with the working animal creation.)—it would appear that he reveals himself on each occasion, in reference to his human nature and mediatorial character, as *working out* the salvation of his people, and as their great exemplar; and how this was manifested in the life of Jesus Christ, whose “meat and drink,” it was “to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work,” is the general subject of the gospels. Hence he was enabled, in the immediate prospect of his departure out of this world, and in his last prayer addressed to his heavenly Father to testify of himself: “I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do;” and at length to close the scene of his life and sufferings with that all important declaration, “*It is finished.*”

By the consideration of this revelation of Christ's character we are taught to imitate him, who has left us an example that we should follow his steps. For it is most interesting to remark, that in this symbol we have another instance in which the church on earth, the church in heaven, and Christ the head of both, are described by the same symbols, as possessing the same character. Thus St. Paul, whose first question after his conversion was, “Lord what wilt thou have me to do?” and who, following the example of him who

called him, “laboured more abundantly” than any of his brethren, exhorted Timothy, his son in the faith, to be a follower of himself as he was of the Lord. “Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season rebuke, exhort,—do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry;” and was enabled also thus to testify concerning himself, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” (2 Tim. iv. 2—7.)

Verse 19. Agreeably to the general character and object of this epistle, as thus set forth in its commencement, we find that our Lord, in his address to this church, dwells particularly upon the abounding of their works of love and laborious services in his cause; for it is not only, like the other six epistles, introduced by the words, “I know thy works;” but there are added the following synonymous expressions, “*thy charity, and service, and faith, and patience, and*” (it is again said) “*thy works;*” and they are commended, that they were so far from having fainted or failed in them, or become weary in well doing, that they had advanced in zeal, and going on from strength to strength, their last works had been found to be even more abundant than their first; their labours thus partaking of that enduring character intimated by the feet of brass.

Verse 20. Notwithstanding this strong commendation, Christ declares that *he had a few things against them*; and they are reprov'd for tolerating, like the Church of Pergamos, the idolatrous and licentious practices derived from the surrounding Gentiles; the chief instigator to which

is here designated as, "*that woman Jezebel*;" so named after her, who, being the daughter of an idolatrous king, after her marriage with Ahab retained her zeal for her own depraved worship, and, feeding at her table four hundred prophets of the groves, used every endeavour to support and propagate it in Israel. This name it appears most in accordance with the literal character of the admonitions contained in these epistles to understand, not as designating, like "Babylon the Great," any organized society; but rather some single influential individual belonging to this church; whom, calling herself a teacher or prophetess, *they suffered to seduce the real servants of Christ into the commission of fornication, and the eating of things offered unto idols*; by which terms may be meant, either a literal partaking in the idolatrous and heathen rites of the surrounding Gentiles; or else the corrupting, by an admixture of these, the purity, simplicity, and spirituality of the Christian worship of this church.

Verse 21. The mention of the space for repentance which had been given to those who had offended, may refer to the *patience* with which Christ endures the provocations of his people, as being one of the greatest of his *labours* and trials. This was the only subject upon which he ever uttered a complaint, yet this forced him once to exclaim, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you!" Such also was his patience and forbearance manifested amidst the provocations of his ancient church in the wilderness, whose manners the apostle says he there endured for the space of forty years.

Verse 22. As Elijah announced before hand the judgments which should fall upon the idolatrous Jeze-

bel; so—respecting the false prophetess of the church in Thyatira, her abettors and followers, here designated as "*those who commit adultery with her*," and as *her children*,—our Lord declares that his forbearance should at length have an end, and that, *except they should repent of their "deeds,"* (or, as it is in the original, "*works*") he would cast them into the *bed of affliction and tribulation*, and *kill them* with disease and death; indicating perhaps the visitation of some temporal punishment of their transgressions; as St. Paul decreed that the offender of the church of Corinth should in such a way be delivered over to Satan: and then our Lord, in reference to the characteristic under which he reveals himself to this particular church, as having "his eyes like unto a flame of fire," adds, "and all the churches," (from this example,) "shall know that I am 'he which searcheth the reins and 'the hearts;'" and, in reference to the second characteristic of his feet being "like unto fine brass" and to those works of the church which he had either approved or condemned, farther adds, "*and I will give unto 'every one of you according to your 'works.'*"

Verses 24, 25. Christ then returns to commendation making known his discrimination with respect to those who had approved themselves and had kept themselves clear from these idolatrous practices *and deep devices of Satan*; and they are assured, as a recompence for their faithfulness, that he would *put upon them no other burden, or labour*, than they had already experienced; and they are exhorted, as followers of him and his example, to a *patient perseverance in their present course* of well doing; and to *hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end*, or till his return and second coming;

which event is always held forth to the church as the subject of their continued expectation, and the period of their anticipated reward.

Verse 26. In the introduction to the promise made to the faithful towards the close of this epistle, we observe one of the most remarkable instances of a peculiar reference being made to the characteristic under which Christ, at the opening of each epistle, reveals himself to that particular church, combined with the strongest evidence, that in this instance it has reference to his own works performed in his human nature, and to those of his church. For whereas the address with which all the promises to the other churches are introduced is simply "To him that overcometh will I give," as at chap. II. 7, 11, 17, and III. 5, 12, 21; we have here a varied form, "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give, &c. &c.;" so that, including this remarkable introduction of the mention of the *works* of this church, we have them named, or referred to, in this epistle, either in the way of commendation or reproof, no less than six times; besides the introduction of the synonymous terms of "charity," "service," and "patience."

The reward promised is the following: "*To him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father.*"—or, in other words, they who shall occupy themselves faithfully and diligently in the service of Christ in this life, will be employed by him in another life and a future dispensation in more exalted and extensive services; and shall vindicate both his cause and their own by the entire destruction of his and their enemies; thus min-

istering under him in the exercise of his regal office, and rendering those services which during the ancient dispensation were executed by the unfallen angels: as when in a single night one hundred and fourscore and five thousand of the army of Sennacherib were thus destroyed. The promise is therefore similar to that made by Christ in the parable of the talents, that those who in this life have been faithful over a few things, and who have well executed the offices entrusted to them, should, in a future life, be made rulers over many things; as also in that of the nobleman, who, going into a far country, gave ten pounds to his ten servants that they might occupy until he should come again; who are represented as being each, on their Lord's return, rewarded according to their works. Thus does our Lord through his servant John, in his last revelation, exhort his people to diligence in labouring in his cause, by promises similar to, though more glorious and explicit than, those by which he enforced his precepts when on earth; and varied only in character from these, in reference to the fact that the Church was now peculiarly suffering from the hands of their enemies.

In the concluding words, "even as I received of my Father," the great promise made to Christ in the second Psalm is referred to: "yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion; I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And we are thus informed

in direct terms of the great and consoling truth, which is every where incidentally made manifest throughout the Apocalypse, viz. that our Lord makes his people partakers of all those privileges and all those honours which in his mediatorial character, as "the Son of God" and "the Son of man," he himself *receives from his Father*. This we also find declared in the passage which closes the principal book of the Apocalypse,—“He that overcometh shall inherit all things.”

The promise made to the saints in general, through the saints of the Church in Thyatira, began to be fulfilled on the expiration of the 1260 years of the afflicted state of the Church, when, Anno Domini 1792, the seventh Apocalyptic trumpet sounded: for then the time came that the glorified spirits of the martyred saints began to assert their right to the kingdom, and to avenge their cause upon their papal adversaries; destroying, by the pouring out of the vials of wrath upon the papal nations, those who had destroyed the meek of the earth. These vials it appears from Rev. xv. 7, are poured out by the Cherubim or Church in heaven; for one of these deliver them to the seven angels, who are with them in the holy of holies, and equally with themselves represent the Church in heaven; acting only as their delegates, on account of their being seven vials of judgment to pour out, and only four Cherubim. Of which seven last plagues upon the Roman empire we have to observe, that six (as far as they effect its western branch) are already exhausted. The judgment however, which is more particularly referred to in this promise, is that of the battle of Armageddon, which takes place in the period of the seventh vial of consummation; in the description given

of which we find that “the armies (of the saints)” which are in “heaven” follow Christ seated on white horses, and clothed in fine linen white and clean,—which is the righteousness of saints,” and are thus (according to his promise, as contained in this epistle) associated with him when he smites the nations, and rules them with a rod of iron, and treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Rev. xix. 15.) And though the temporal reign of Christ and his saints hitherto, during the period of the *thirty* years, and the first 14 which have already expired of the *forty five* years of Dan. xii. 11, 12, has been an invisible reign, or has been visible only in its effects; the last great act of wrath, now rapidly approaching, may be expected to be attended with some more open manifestation of his power and glory; and perhaps also of the ten thousand saints, whom, according to the ancient prophecy of Enoch, he will bring with him; as formerly the giving of the law from Mount Sinai (to which this future manifestation of Christ, as the personal Word or Law of God corresponds) was rendered more glorious by the ministry of hosts of angels.

This battle—or revelation from heaven of Jesus Christ as “*King of kings and Lord of lords*,” taking vengeance upon his enemies,—is again mentioned in chap. xvii. 14; and the glorified saints who will attend his triumph, (there spoken of as “they that are with him,”) are designated as “called and chosen and faithful,” thus partaking of the character of Christ himself, who when he appears on this occasion as the revealed word of God takes the title of “faithful and true;” (Rev. xix. 11) like as the two books of his revealed and written word, (viz. that which is sealed, and that which

is open,) as contained in this Apocalypse, and each with a similar declaration, viz. "These words are true and faithful," (Rev. xxi. 5,) "These words are faithful and true." (Rev. xxii. 6.)

From the above description it clearly appears, that it is at this time, and upon this occasion, that the promise made by Christ to the faithful of the church in Thyatira will receive its fulfilment.

Verse 28. Our Lord further promises that, to him that overcometh, he will give "*the morning star.*" He says of himself in Rev. xxi. 16, "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star,"—a beautiful symbol of Christ, as being the chiefest among ten thousand of all the hosts of heaven and altogether lovely; and its connexion in this passage with the character of Christ, as "the root and offspring of David," evidences that it relates to his regal office; and that the saints in Thyatira are thus promised that they shall share with Christ in the glories of the millennial reign which follow their triumphs at Armageddon; being the same promise that was made to those of the church of Smyrna under the assurance that they should "not be hurt of the second death." And we thus find,—corresponding to the literal description of the millennial reign of the saints with Christ, as contained in Rev. xx. 4, and of their subsequent "reign with him for ever and ever," mentioned in Rev. xxii. 5,—two pairs of symbols: viz. first, "the marriage supper of the Lamb," followed by the "New Jerusalem" or married state; and again the light of "the morning star," opening the way for the brighter and more glorious light of the sun;—alike beautiful sets of symbols, and equally appropriate to the subject: for as the marriage supper is the joyful

forerunner of the married state; and as the morning star ushers in the universal day; so the first resurrection, and the glory of the millennial period of light and joy, is but the harbinger of the more blessed period of the general resurrection and the eternal day, when, in the new Jerusalem, the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof.

The Church in Sardis.

CHAP. III. 1. In the next epistle addressed to the Church in Sardis, the city of Cræsus, and the ancient seat of the Lydian kings, our Lord reveals himself in his priestly character, as "*he that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*" It has been already explained, on chap. i. 4, that the expression, "the seven spirits of God," designates the Holy Spirit as manifested in the covenant of grace, or sent forth into the seven churches of the earth,—i. e. into the universal church of God. Christ therefore, in the same manner as the high priest was under the Law consecrated to his office by the holy anointing oil, is here revealed as possessing the fulness of the Spirit, as his qualification for the priestly mediatorial office.

The names either of "the Messiah," or of "the Christ," (the one signifying in Hebrew, and the other in Greek, "*the anointed one*" of God,) are those by which he was known to all, who, taught by the ancient Jewish prophets, waited for the redemption and consolation of Israel. Thus Andrew declared to Philip "we have found the *Messiah*;" and the woman of Samaria says, "when the *Messiah* cometh"—and again, "is not this the *Christ*?" And so also in other instances; for it was by this name that he was prophesied of in the second Psalm: "Why do the heathen so furiously rage to-

gether, against the Lord and against his *anointed*?" or (as it is rendered Acts iv. 26) "against his *Christ*"—him "whom God had *anointed*." (v. 27.) See also Psalm xlv. 7, and Isaiah xlii. 1. Agreeably to these predictions it is testified in the gospels, that Jesus Christ was first formed, in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and the token given to John the Baptist by which he might recognise him as the expected Messiah was, that the spirit of God should be seen descending and remaining upon him; for in this he was distinguished from all others of the sons of men, that God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him. After this manifest and open anointing by the Holy Spirit, all the important acts of his life and ministry are described as having been done through the Spirit's influence. He began his arduous course, and stood forth as the champion of his church, in the power of the Spirit; for we are told that immediately after his baptism, "being full of the Holy Ghost," he returned from Jordan, and was "led" (or as it is otherwise more forcibly expressed, "driven,") by the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Leaving then the scene of his successful contest with the great enemy of mankind, "he returned, in the power of the spirit, into Galilee;" and there opened his public ministration by applying to himself, and to the then present time, the prophecy of Isaiah—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek." (Lxi. 1.)

To obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost for his church, and renew the intercourse between God and man, broken off by sin, was also the final and crowning object of his suffer-

ings, atoning death, and triumphant resurrection; and that which made it expedient that he should be taken away from the earth; as he assured his sorrowing disciples. (John xvi. 7; see also xiv. 16 and 26.) When therefore he first met his assembled disciples after his resurrection, "he breathed on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost;"^a and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, he imparted, in more abundant measure, and in all the plenitude of his gifts and operations, the HOLY SPIRIT, as the great promise of the Father. Thus he fulfilled the promise of God made to his ancient church, which had been for ages, i. e. throughout the whole period of the legal dispensation, annually anticipated; and had been more recently and explicitly promised by Christ to the apostles; and in expectation of the reception of which gift they had farther been commanded to tarry for a time in Jerusalem. Thus were they anointed for their public ministry by him, who, when pointed out to the Baptist as he upon whom the Holy Spirit should be seen resting, was described, at the same time, as "he that anointeth with the Holy Ghost." And he now qualified and gave, and throughout every period will continue so to do, "to some 'apostles, and some prophets, and 'some evangelists, and some pastors 'and teachers; for the perfecting of 'the saints, for the work of the 'ministry, for the edifying of the 'body of Christ."^b

That Christ possesses the fulness of the Spirit, in order that he may impart it to his churches as their occasions require, and send forth at his pleasure qualified and faithful labourers into his vineyard, is indicated in the opening of this epistle by his revealing himself as he that hath—not "the seven *spirits* of God"

^a John xx. 22.

^b Ephes. iv. 11, 12.

only, but "the seven stars" also; that is, that hath the ministers of all the churches at his disposal. For, as the great high priest, he has the whole spiritual priesthood under his controul, and wherever they are sent they are exclusively his gift; wherefore, as the church of England rightly holds, no man should think or presume to undertake this holy office, unless he believes himself to be, in some measure, called or anointed to it by the Spirit of God, as was Aaron.

Christ, having thus revealed himself to the Church of Sardis, rebukes them for contenting themselves with an empty profession of religion. *They had a name to live and no more, for they were "dead" in trespasses and sins: or, if not arrived at that stage of corruption, had lost all the life, energy, and vitality of religion, —resembling the Jews, who, when they were in their worst estate, prided themselves only so much the more upon being the children of Abraham; and especially the priests, when they were satisfied with their names appearing in the genealogies of the race of Aaron, while they were little attentive to render unto God an enlightened and spiritual service; respecting the inutility of whose dead works, and their unacceptableness in his sight, God thus expostulates by the mouth of his prophet: "To what purpose is the 'multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord, I am full of 'the burnt offerings of rams,—I 'delight not in the blood of bullocks, '—bring no more vain oblations, 'incense is an abomination to me; 'the new moons and sabbaths I 'cannot away with."* The professors of the Church of Sardis too much resemble these their forerunners of the legal priesthood: instead of sustaining the character of "a 'royal priesthood, an holy nation, a

'peculiar people, shewing forth the 'praises of him who had called them 'out of darkness into his marvellous 'light," they were, like the rest of the world, "*dead to eternity, alive to time*;"—and though appointed by Christ to be as the salt of the earth, they had themselves lost their spiritual savour.

In reference, we may suppose, to the appointed watchings of the priesthood in the temple service, they are exhorted *to watch, and strengthen the things which remained, that were ready to die*; for as the lamps of the golden candlestick required constant and stated trimming and replenishing with oil; and the sacred fire of the altar required continually cherishing; so the graces of the christian are ever ready to languish, and except maintained by our constant endeavours, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, must be ever on the wane.

Christ, as the great high priest of his church, declares that he had not found the works of the church of Sardis "*perfect before God*:" where-as the consideration that the priest's office under the law required perfection, so that none who had any defect of body were permitted to officiate,—and the requirement of the same perfection in the paschal lamb, and in all their sacrifices, without which they could not be presented before God as an acceptable offering,—should have inculcated upon the professors of the church of Sardis, as a spiritual priesthood, the necessity of aiming at perfection; as our Lord also taught his disciples in the precept "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"

Verse 3. They are then exhorted, in reference to these declensions, *to remember how they had received, and heard, and to hold fast, and repent*; as are the churches of Ephe-

sus and Thyatira, in the preceeding epistles; and as the Hebrews were thus exhorted by St. Paul—"Call 'to remembrance the former days; 'for ye have need of patience, that 'after ye have done the will of God 'ye might receive the promise: for 'yet a little while, and he that shall 'come, will come, and will not 'tarry."^c In reference also to the appointed officer or captain of the temple, going his rounds at uncertain hours, in order to ascertain that every one of the priests and Levites, who had the guard of the temple, was at his post and watchful, our Lord further warns them, *that if they should not watch, he would come upon them as a thief in the night, and they should not know what hour he would come upon them.* In like reference to the ordinances of the temple service, the church of Christ has already, by the pouring out of the sixth Apocalyptic vial, been warned of his approaching coming; lest they should be taken by surprise and unawares.—"Behold, (he says at this time,) I come 'as a thief. Blessed is he that 'watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and 'they see his shame:" (Rev. xvi. 15.) the allusion being here also to the visits paid by the Captain of the temple, and to the punishment inflicted by him, who, going his rounds at night with torches, if he found any sleeping on their post, as an evidence of the fact, and as a deserved disgrace, set fire to their garments; as David cut off the skirts of Saul's robe, in order to prove the fact of his having had his life in his power when he was in a deep sleep; and as the king of the children of Ammon did to the servants of king David, with the design of inflicting upon them a great public disgrace. How far in the present day every

^c Heb. x. 32—37.

individual amongst us has, by comparing the records which Christ has given respecting the awful event of his second coming with the manifest signs of the times, or by other means, endeavoured to obey this injunction of watchfulness, must be left to each one in his own case to determine.

Verse 4. Christ recognises a few names in the register of the priesthood, that is, a few of the professing people of the church of Sardis, who had continued to walk in the brightness and purity of their first profession, and had not by their sinful declensions defiled their priestly garments: these our Lord declares "*shall walk with him in white.*" And though the imputation of Christ's righteousness, indicated by the gift of the white priestly garment, is a privilege enjoyed by the believer in Christ in every step of his progress, and is that indeed by which, becoming a believer, he passes from death unto life;—and though it is also described as the reward first bestowed in the heavenly state upon the martyrs who had fallen by pagan persecution; in the enjoyment of which they rest waiting until the purposes of God shall be matured, and the time appointed for their open vindication and exaltation shall arrive;^d—yet the promise here made by Christ, that the faithful of the church of Sardis should *walk before him in white*, must rather be referred to the new Jerusalem or eternal state, of which it is said, when seen in vision by the apostle, "The glory 'of God did lighten it and the Lamb 'is the light thereof." And it is added, (borrowing a figure from the literal Jerusalem, considered as the city of the great king, and the metropolis to which all the tribes went up to worship,) "the nations 'of them that are saved *shall walk*

^d Rev. vi. 11.

' *in the light of it ;*,' while the unsullied purity of those who shall be permitted to walk with Christ in their white garments as kings and priests, and in the light of God and of the Lamb, is farther described : " And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."—" Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city ; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. xii. 14, 15.)

Verse 5. The promise made by Christ to the saints of the church of Sardis, of being partakers with him in his priestly character when he shall be manifested as a priest upon his throne, is in this verse again repeated—" He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment." And in reference to the genealogies which the priests were particularly careful to keep, that they might prove their descent from Aaron, and their right to officiate before the high priest in white, he adds,—"*And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.*" For want of their names appearing in the registers of the descendants of Aaron, it is mentioned in Ezra ii. 62, that some of those that returned from the captivity in Babylon were, as polluted, excluded from the priesthood ; and we read in the account of the regulations of the temple service at a later period, that the Sanhedrim sat daily in a particular apartment, " it being one of the branches of their duty to examine the priests who were of age, relative to the clearness of their descent, and their freedom from the blemishes which were considered

' as excluding them from the priesthood. If the evidence which they brought of their descent from Aaron was defective, they were clothed in black, veiled in black, and dismissed in disgrace. But if they could prove their descent, and were free from blemish, then they were enrolled among their brethren, were clothed in white raiment, and consecrated by the accustomed offering." From the disgrace of being publicly rejected from the priestly office, those of the church of Sardis who should overcome in their present arduous contest are promised an exemption ; as well as a permanent enrolment in its registers, or in *the book of life.*

The same allusion to the books containing the names of the priesthood, spiritually called *the book of life*, appears to be made in the description given of the day of the general judgment, Rev. xx. 11, 12—" I saw a great white throne— and I saw the dead small and great stand before God ; and the books were opened, *and another book was opened which is the book of life,* and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.—*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life* was cast into the lake of fire."

Our Lord respecting such as should overcome farther adds—" *I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels ;*" this figure apparently alluding to the open and public reading out the names of those who shall be found registered in the book of life, as having overcome and by sufficient evidences established their priestly character. Our Lord promises a like open recognition of his people when he thus describes the solemnities of the last judgment : " when the Son of man shall come in his glory and

' all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory.'—"Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And at another time he solemnly declared to his disciples this awful truth, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." For he will say to them placed on his left hand, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" and those not found written in the book of life, will he cast into the lake of fire.—"This is the second death." (Rev. xx. 14, 15.)

But from such dreadful condemnation all those shall be exempted who like the saints of the church of Smyrna shall have been faithful unto death; or whose names, like those of the church of Sardis, shall be found written in the book of life; nor shall the names of any be blotted out of that book, who shall have preserved the purity and whiteness of their priestly vestments undefiled by spot or stain; or rather shall have washed them, all polluted and defiled as they are, and made them white, "so as no fuller on earth can white them," in the cleansing and all-atoning blood of the Lamb.

The Church in Philadelphia.

The sixth epistle is addressed to the church in Philadelphia, once a flourishing city of Asia Minor: to whom Christ reveals himself in his *regal* character, as *having the key of David*; and the circumstance that the revelation of Christ in his priestly character has, in the order of time, preceded this, may be explain-

ed on the ground, that the epistles are addressed to the *churches*, and that in such addresses the priestly office naturally precedes the regal. That there is really a significancy in the actual order of the revelations of Christ as contained in these epistles may be inferred, not only from their own internal evidence, but also from other similar instances of peculiarity and marked design in the order and arrangement of the several parts of the Apocalypse. Thus, in the temporal history of the Roman empire, as divided into its distinct western and eastern branches, that of the western branch comes first, as communicated by the voices of the Cherubim, (Rev. vi. vii.) on account of its territory containing Rome the metropolis of the fourth empire, which was the ruling one at the time the Apocalypse was written; and the history of the eastern branch follows, as communicated by the voices of the trumpet angels, (Rev. viii. ix. x. 1—7) because from its territory (formerly the seat of the three first empires) the dominion had then passed away. On the contrary, in the detailed history of the church of Christ, similarly divided, (Rev. xii. xiii. xiv.) that of the eastern church comes first in chap. xii. 1—6, for the church not being any where dominant, the question of precedency can have reference only to past or future time; and the possession of the holy city Jerusalem, with its temple, the scene of the actual past manifestations of the divine presence, and the predicted scene of future still more glorious manifestations, naturally entitles the eastern territory to the preference in all that relates to the history of the church; whence arises the circumstance, already noticed, that throughout the Apocalypse the closest connexion is maintained between it and the church; one evidence of

which is now immediately before us, in the fact that the epistles to the churches are addressed only to those situated within it.

This consideration of designed arrangement confirms our view of the revelations of Christ in the third and fourth epistles, as having reference to his divine and human nature. For what other than these (we may ask,) could have the precedence of those, in which he makes himself known as priest, and as king. It confirms also our view of the epistles, as being addressed to the churches under extreme tribulation, and magnifies the unspeakable love of Christ, in this respect,—that all his other glories are as it were veiled and superseded by it; whence his first manifestations to his churches, thus circumstanced, (as contained in the two first epistles) are those of his *caring* for them.

The complete revelation of Christ made to the Church of Philadelphia is as follows: "*These things saith he that is holy, he that is true; he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth;*" the words, "he that hath the key of David," referring us to the passage of the introductory vision chap. i. 18, where our Lord says, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore; Amen, and *hath the keys of hell and of death.*" These symbols imply the possession of an universal dominion, even over the invisible world; for immediately after his resurrection from the dead, (by which, as the apostle states, he was declared to be the Son of God with power,) he revealed himself to his disciples as having *all power* committed to him in heaven and in earth. (Matt. xxviii. 18.)

Isaiah ix. 6, 7 predicts the future reign of Christ as "the son of Da-

vid;" by which name he was known to the expectant Jews.—"Unto us 'a child is born,—a son is given;—' and the government shall be upon 'his shoulder;—of the increase of 'his government, and peace, there 'shall be no end; *upon the throne 'of David*, and upon his kingdom, 'to establish it with judgment and 'with justice from henceforth even 'for ever." He also in similar language typically predicts his future reign, when thus speaking of the high-priest, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.—"And I will commit the 'government into his hand, and *the 'key of the house of David will I 'lay upon his shoulder; so that he 'shall open, and none shall shut; 'and shall shut, and none shall open.*" Jeremiah also prophecies of the future reign of Christ, as the Son of David: "Behold the days come, 'saith the Lord, that I will raise 'unto *David a righteous branch;* 'and a king shall reign, and prosper, and shall execute judgment 'and justice upon the earth." David also in the 72nd Psalm describes the glories of the millennial reign of Christ under the figure of that of his own son Solomon. The predictions relating to the Messiah in his regal character are also frequently worded as if relating to David himself, as being an eminent type of him; and David, in the Psalms, when apparently speaking in his own person, is frequently speaking exclusively in that of the Messiah; as is observed in Acts ii. 25—31, with respect to that particular prophecy, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." (See Jeremiah xxx. 9 and Hos. iii. 5.)

Answering to the above predictions, in which Christ is spoken of as the son and successor of David, (or even as David himself,) it is shown in the gospels that both Jo-

seph, the reputed father of Christ, as well as his virgin mother, were of the house and lineage of David; whence it arose that his birth took place as predicted in "Bethlehem the city of David." Christ here manifesting himself as having the key of David, or, agreeably to a subsequent revelation at the close of the Apocalypse, as both "the root and offspring of David," is therefore revealed in his regal character, as born heir to the throne of David; according to the saying of the angel who announced his future birth:—"The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David," which is yet to be established in all its splendour when Christ "shall reign in Jerusalem and before his ancients gloriously."

The *key* is naturally a symbol of power and authority: uncontrollable power and universal authority are therefore implied when Christ here reveals himself as "he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth;" corresponding nearly to the terms employed when he gave his Apostles a participation in it, saying, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." With respect to the phrase which occurs in the prophecy of Isaiah, and which is so nearly connected with our text: (viz. "the government shall be upon his shoulder," and again, "the *key* of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder,") it is to be observed, that the *key*, being in ancient times of considerable size, and sometimes formed of wood, was carried on state occasions on the shoulder, in reference to the trust and dignity it implied; as is the *mace*, the emblem of authority, in modern times. The burden of government is also represented figuratively as laid upon the

shoulder, the usual position in which all burdens are borne; and a somewhat similar figure of speech is employed in Psalm LXXV. in reference to the divine government,—“The earth is weak, I bear up the pillars of it.”

The further revelation which Christ gives of himself in our text, as "he that is holy," "he that is true," does not exactly appear in the opening vision of Chap. I; but in the ninth chapter, where Christ reveals himself as he that is "called THE WORD OF GOD," and as having a name written "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," there is a third name by which he is "called," and it is the first in order of the three, namely, that of "FAITHFUL AND TRUE," (Rev. XIX. 11) to which it is also added, in "*righteousness* doth he judge and make war;" and it has been before observed, respecting the saints who follow him manifested in power, and in their *regal* character; that *their holiness* is denoted by their being clothed in "fine linen white and clean,"—"which is the *righteousness* of saints;" while their *truth and faithfulness* are shown by their being characterized as "chosen and faithful."

Though we find not however the direct words of our text, ("he that is holy, he that is true,") amongst the characteristics of the introductory vision; and have been constrained to search for them elsewhere; we shall not I conceive err, if we consider the description given in Chap. I. 14, of Christ as having "*his head and his hairs white like wool, as white as snow,*" as intended to be emblematical of the holiness and truth, the purity and righteousness of his government. A similar description appears in Dan. VII. 9, where Christ, who is the revelation of the Father, and unto whom all judgment has been committed, is re-

presented as "the Ancient of days," sitting in judgment upon the apostate nations of the western Roman empire. The same holiness and truth, righteousness and purity of judgment, indicated by the whiteness of Christ's garment, and of the hair of his head, may be considered as denoted also by the "great white throne" upon which he is in like manner represented in this Apocalypse as sitting at the great day of the general judgment; when the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of the things written therein, according to their works. Isaiah xi. 1—5 likewise thus describes the righteousness of the future government of him that hath the key of David: "And there shall 'come forth a rod out of the stem of 'Jesse, and a branch shall grow out 'of his roots; And the Spirit of the 'Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, 'the spirit of counsel and might, the 'spirit of knowledge, and fear of 'the Lord; and shall make him of 'quick understanding in the fear of 'the Lord; and he shall not judge 'after the sight of his eyes, neither 'reprove after the hearing of his 'ears; But with righteousness shall 'he judge the poor, and reprove with 'equity for the meek of the earth." And then it is said in reference to his character as the "word of God," in its condemning power, (kindred to his regal character,) "and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," after which it continues as before; "and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins:" than which passage no more full and satisfactory comment could be given upon the words of our text, "he that hath the key of David,"—"he that is holy, he that is true;" nor any thing more

strikingly illustrate what is implied when it is said of Christ in the opening vision, "his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow."

Verse 8. To the Church of Philadelphia our Lord speaks only words of encouragement, assuring them, in reference to the characteristics under which he had revealed himself unto them, as "he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;" that he *had set before them an open door, and no man could shut it; for they had a little strength, and had kept his word, and had not denied his name:*" words which forcibly bring to mind those addressed to his sincere but timid and defective followers, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Verse 9. Our Lord encourages them farther by undertaking to plead their cause against their adversaries, according to the prophecy of Isaiah already quoted, in which it is said that he should judge the poor with righteousness, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. "Behold," he says, "*I will make them 'of the synagogue of Satan, which 'say they are Jews and are not, but 'do lie; behold I will make them to 'come and worship before thy feet, 'and to know that I have loved thee.*" Their adversaries being called of the synagogue of Satan may have reference to the character of the persecutions they were now suffering under, which were carried on with the view of maintaining inviolate the empire of Satan, and the paganism of the old Roman empire; and it has been before observed how these Jews, said in our text "to lie," in saying that they were the true seed of the faithful Abraham, were forward above others in promoting these persecutions against the Gentile

converts. Christ declares that such shall be made to humble themselves before those whom they had oppressed, acknowledge the superior privileges they possessed in the favour of their Creator, and worship before their feet, confessing that God hath loved and highly exalted them. Thus did he declare during his personal ministry that eventually, "the meek should inherit the earth."

Thus in the ancient Jewish history, when Haman the Agagite, "the Jews enemy," sought the destruction not only of Mordecai but of the whole nation of the Jews, he was by the providence of God reduced to humble himself in a signal manner before him whom he hated, walking on foot before him and proclaiming, "thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour;" and throughout the whole hundred and twenty seven provinces of the Persian empire the Jews, whose extirpation was intended, had the advantage over and destroyed their enemies, and "had light and gladness, and joy and honour;" so that many of those whose captives they were became Jews, "for the fear of the Jews fell upon them:" and this event, perhaps considered as a type of their enemies being finally humbled before them, and made to worship at their feet, was celebrated by an annual festival continued unto this day. That they will indeed be thus exalted in the latter day in the sight of those nations amongst whom they have been dispersed, and by whom they have been held in bondage, is plainly declared. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass—that many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord,—and that ten men shall take hold, out of all

s Zech. VIII. 20—23.

'languages of the nations, even
'shall take hold of the skirt of him
'that is a Jew, saying, We will go
'with you for we have heard that
'God is with you."g

Verses 10, 11. Because they had patiently endured in the cause of Christ, he promises to them an exemption from those farther trials which should come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon earth: which promise may have reference to the Mahometan woes which desolated the eastern half of the world, the seat of these Churches; the fulfilment of which is considered by some to be visible even to this day, in the existence of a church on the site of Philadelphia, of at least nominal Christians. Our Lord then exhorts them, as before he did the Churches of Thyatira and Sardis, to perseverance in their present course, in expectation of his speedy appearing, *that no man might take from them that "crown" which he, as the king of kings, "the root and the offspring of David," "faithful and true" to his promises, and righteous in all his judgments, was ready to bestow upon them.*

Verse 12. The promise made by the Spirit to those who should overcome is, *that Christ would make them pillars in the temple of his God*; or, in other words, they are promised that they should partake with him in his regal privileges; the pillar being the situation at which the king usually stood; as we read—when Jehoiada brought forth the young king Joash, and exhibited him to the people in the temple with the royal crown upon his head,—that "he stood by the pillar, as the manner was."^h And we also read of king Josiah, that when he made a solemn covenant with God in behalf of himself and his people in the temple, "the king stood by a pil-

^h 2 Kings XI. 14.

lar ;”² which in the parallel passage, of 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31, is called “his place.” And it is observed in a note upon this passage, that “Orinthians considered a place by a pillar or column as particularly honourable : whence Homer, (Od. XXIII.) places Ulysses on a lofty throne by a pillar.” Our Lord assumes them that as a pillar is fixed for ever in the temple, so they should be established in the house of God, and should *go no more out* ; nor should the fear of change or of falling away, arising from a consciousness of their little strength, longer trouble them ; for he whose gifts and calling are without repentance would write upon them, so as never to be obliterated, *the name of his God and the name of the city of his God, the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from his God.*—Of which blessed and eternal state thus symbolized it is said, “there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and for ever.”

Christ adds—“And I will write upon him my new name ;” of which, as signifying Christ’s *regal* name, we have treated largely in the exposition of the epistle to the Church in Thyatira.

To the importance of the future revelation of Christ in his regal character, in which the saints are in this epistle especially promised a participation, the Church have been till lately entirely insensible, and are as yet only partially awakened. For as the Jews refused to recognise Christ in his priestly character, and in his humiliation, and looked only for a king and conqueror ; so the Gentile Church, having received him

in the former character, are themselves indifferent to the promises of his future exaltation upon earth, and his revelation in power, to take place within the limits of time. But did they rightly consider, that though Christ is the revelation of the whole three persons of the divine Trinity, the second person only, the Word made flesh, was manifested in his priestly office at the feast of the passover ; and that the Holy Spirit, as sent by Christ, was manifested only on the feast of Pentecost ; and that the manifestation of God the Father, in Christ, as king and creator, promised by the institution of the feast of tabernacles, remains yet unaccomplished ; they would be prepared to receive, in their plain and obvious meaning, the promises of these epistles, and all the other prophecies which so abundantly testify to that great event.

The Church in Laodicea.

In the first two of the six preceding epistles we have found that the characteristics assumed by Christ refer to the then existing circumstances of his church ; but in the four next following, respectively to his divine and human nature, and to his offices as priest and as king. In this, the last of the epistles, we return again to a revelation having more immediate reference to the state of the church ; but not as before to their temporary situation and immediate exigencies ; but to these as existing at all times, and under all circumstances, summing up as it were the various qualifications of his character previously made known, and shewing how the church is interested in them all, as constituting him, what he here reveals himself to be, “*the way, the truth, and the life* ;” the only medium by which any man can have access to the Father.

² 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

Verse 14. Laodicea was an opulent city not far from Colosse, and is mentioned by St. Paul, when, in his epistle to the latter church, he directs that those which he had addressed to each should be mutually interchanged.^a There is a wonderful sublimity and comprehensiveness in the titles which Christ here assumes; and first that of "*the Amen*," signifying in the Hebrew, *true, faithful, certain*. This affirmation when used by our Saviour is rendered in our version of the gospels by the word "*verily*," as in our Lord's address to Nicodemus, "*amen, amen*, (or verily, verily,) I say unto thee."^b All the promises of God are likewise said to be *amen*, that is *certain*, and *firm* in Christ.^c And when Isaiah says that "one shall bless himself in the God of *truth*," and shall swear by the "God of truth," it is in the Hebrew "the God *Amen*."^d Christ—from whom all blessings are to be received, upon whose faithfulness to his promises all our hopes depend, and in whom all the prophecies centre—by appropriating to himself this title, pledges himself, as it were, to the steadfast fulfilment of them; and it represents his unchangeableness and stability of purpose, in opposition to the variableness of every other creature. This was implied when he declared that the Scriptures could not be broken, and that one jot or tittle of them should in no wise pass away till all should be fulfilled. As an evidence of this, all things that were written concerning his death being accomplished, saving one only, that this also "might be fulfilled," he exclaimed, "I thirst;" and then breathed out his soul in those last comprehensive words, "It is finished." This title

of "*the Amen*," or this solemn sanction by which he confirms his revealed word, will be found peculiarly connected by him with the doctrine of his second advent in power; (see Rev. i. 7; xxii. 20;) as if to give this awful event, which must yet come to pass, ere those Scriptures will be fulfilled which relate to the purposed full revelation of the godhead in the person of Christ, a double sanction and surety, answerably to its importance; and a fixed and unshaken hold in the expectations of the church. For the Holy Ghost foresaw the weakness of their faith, as well as the coldness of their affections; and that there would arise scoffers in the last days, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?"^e

Our Lord also adds to this title the corresponding one of "*the faithful and true witness*:" for testifying of those heavenly things which he had seen with the Father, he brought the knowledge of God down to man, as by his mediatorial work he reconciled man to God. Christ, as St. Paul observes, *witnessed* before Pontius Pilate a good confession; which itself was to this purpose, that he had come into the world *to bear witness unto the truth*.^f He reveals himself also at the close of this book both as "*the Amen*" and "*he which testifieth of these things*,"^g and principally, as has been observed, to his purposed second Advent—It is a truth universally written upon the pages of Scripture, that in every respect as is Christ, so must also his servants be; and we find accordingly that one of the glorified spirits of the saints was sent to *testify* unto St. John of these things in the Churches;^h which angel again says of himself, that he is of those that

^a Col. iv. 16.

^b 2 Pet. iii. 4.

^c Rev. xxii. 16.

^d John iii. 3.

^e 1 Tim. vi. 13; John xviii. 37.

^f 2 Cor. i. 20.

^g Isa. lxxv. 16.

^h Rev. xxii. 20.

have the *testimony* of Jesus.¹ So the *martyrs* or *witnesses* of Jesus, when caught up to heaven to join this triumphant body, are represented as having overcome on earth by "the word of their *testimony*;" and lastly we read of St. John himself that he *bare record* of the word of God and of the *testimony* of Jesus.² Hence it appears that the character of a witness to truth is an essential one, not only of Christ but of the church in heaven and of the church on earth; and it may become an object of interesting enquiry, and of self examination to many, how far, if not required in this christian country to bear witness to his name generally, they yet do so with respect to those truths to which he himself specially testified, and in which they are themselves persuaded that the vitality of Christianity consists.

Christ here farther reveals himself as *the beginning* or head of *the creation of God*; for he was the first in the purpose of God, though not in manifestation. Adam and all who went before were but types and fore-shewings of him that was to come, who is declared to be head over all things to his church, "the first born of every creature."¹ The spirits of the just in heaven are likewise denominated "the church of *the first born*"² or the head and beginning of all creation; and are represented consistently with this idea in Rev. iv, where they are seen as surrounding the mediatorial throne, under the symbols of a man, the only rational creature,—a Lion, the chief of wild beasts,—a Bull, the chief of tame cattle,—and an Eagle, the chief of birds. Our Lord also, in reference to his character as "*the first born, the beginning of the creation of God,*" claimed for his

service, and as representing his elect church on earth, all *the first born* amongst the children of Israel, accepting only of the tribe of Levi in their room, and as a substitute for them.³ Here we observe the elect church on earth, the church in heaven, and Christ their head, all designated verbally, or symbolically, by the same name, viz. that of *the first born, the beginning or head of the creation of God*.

Verses 15, 16. In proceeding to consider the address of Christ to the Laodicean Church, we find that he who came to reconcile heaven and earth, and unite all things in one to himself, reproves them for being lukewarm in his cause, neither hot nor cold, neither for him nor against him; which state of indifferency he declares to be more odious and affronting to himself than even a decided opposition; and that such characters he will reject with loathing. A church after having long professed the faith is peculiarly liable to fall into this state, but none can be more dangerous. We still retain, at all events in our formularies, the doctrines of free grace, and of the fulness to be found in Christ for the supply of all our wants; but the doctrine does not perhaps recommend itself as suited to our case, or it has not been brought out prominently to our view in the preached word; and that spiritual instinct has not been conferred upon us which causes us to feel our necessities, and to find no rest till we meet with that provision in the unadulterated doctrine of the word of God, which he who gave the appetite will in his providence supply,—like children first desiring the sincere milk of the word. Or perhaps Christ has been fully offered to us, but when we see him there is in our apprehensions

¹ Rev. xix. 10.

² Rev. i. 2.

³ Col. i. 15.

^m Heb. xii. 23.

ⁿ Exod. xxxii. 19; Num. iiii. 12.

also no beauty in him that we should desire him : he stands at the door and knocks, yet is despised and rejected of men. But alas ! how awful will be the contrast, when those who have so despised and rejected him, shall be themselves rejected, not in time, but for eternity.

Verse 17. The cause of this indifference Christ proclaims to be, that they knew not their entire dependance upon him for every thing that could give them acceptance with God ; but fancied that *they were rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing*, at the same time that they were in truth *wretched, "and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,"* and wanting every thing. In consequence of this natural blindness it was, that he declared, that the first work of the Holy Spirit, whom he would send down from heaven, would be to convince the hearts of men of *sin*, or of their own sinfulness.^o

Verse 18. He counsels them, yielding to such convictions, to come to him for a supply of all their spiritual necessities, nor longer to confide in what was externally commendable, that was derived from mere nature's stores ; but to buy of him, without money and without price, (for none have they to offer) "gold tried in the fire," a righteousness without any particle of dross, which had stood the test of the searching power of the divine law, and having been found fully satisfactory and adequate to all its acquirements, constitutes the wealth of his body the church, and enriches every member of it ; while as our clothing it forms a vesture of spotless purity, robed in which alone we can gain admittance into the heavenly courts, or to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The fatal character of their blindness, which led them to be

satisfied with their condition by nature, moves our Lord in compassion to them to exhort them to *anoint their eyes with eye salve that they might see* and realize, in order that they might provide against this their spiritual destitution.

Verse 19. Christ declares, that when those whom he loves have fallen into this cold and indifferent state of mind towards himself, he rebukes and chastens them by afflictions to awaken them again to a sense of what they owe to him. So when he promised that his people should receive, as tokens of his love, all the blessings of this life, he added the qualification necessary for them in these words,—"*with afflictions.*" He exhorts his church to improve these for the purpose intended, to repent of their declensions, and to be again zealous in his cause. Happy is the church that, so chastised in love, takes the warning, repents, and does her first works.

Verse 20. Christ then declares, that as he voluntarily came down from heaven to give himself for the life of the world, so he continues to offer himself to his people ; that *he stands and knocks at the door of their hearts* by various means, by blessings conferred, by chastisements inflicted, or by his preached gospel ; and that if any yield to these, *hear his voice*, and receive him into their hearts, he establishes the most intimate communion and fellowship with them, implied in the promise "*I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me,*" corresponding closely with his gracious declaration, that those who thus receive him, he calls not servants, but friends.

Verse 21. St. Paul says to such as these, who thus receive Christ in all his offices, "All things are yours." Christ will not withhold

^o John xvi. 8.

from them any thing that is his. It was in the exercise of unknown love, and that he might share with them the great recompence of reward, that he undertook the mighty work of their redemption; and when raised to the mediatorial throne, and having all power given unto him in heaven and in earth, he thus promises that he will share with them this also, "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*" Accordingly we find, in a subsequent chapter, where the opening of this book of prophecy to the Church on earth is exhibited, that the Church of the first-born in heaven are represented as being *in the midst of that throne, and round about that throne*, which is incircled by the rainbow of the covenant.^p In this great and concluding promise every other is, as it were, comprehended and summed up. If Christ's sitting with his Father on his throne implies an equality with the Father in his divine nature, his admitting his Church to sit with him on his mediatorial throne implies a like equality or oneness of himself with them in reference to his human nature. This was the great mystery opened in Paradise, when the woman, the bride, the Lamb's wife, was taken out of the side of the first Adam; and then, when having humbled himself, and taken upon himself the form of a servant, he had, as the condition of the service wherewith he had served, resumed his former power and glory that he might share it with his Church, there was no

alteration in the familiarity and endearment of his language towards them; it was still the same—"Go tell my brethren"—"Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me?"—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—"Fear not I am he that liveth and was dead." The last promise made to the Church in Laodicea is then the same as the first, symbolically declared in Paradise. But O, how great the promise, how unspeakable the glory of those, who, in reference to his human nature, shall even in an eternal world be one with Christ, shall sit with him on his throne and share his glories!—what sentiments of humiliation, of love and of gratitude, ought not such revelations to excite! The Church in heaven give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne; the Elders cast down their crowns before him: may we, thus taught by the revelations they communicated, learn (if we have not yet done so; and if we have learnt, however imperfectly, strive more and more to enter into its meaning) the words of their song, "Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honour and power,"—"thou art worthy"—for thou wast slain and hast "redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation."—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

"*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*" **VERSE 22.**

JAS. H. FRERE.

Correspondence.

ON 2 THESSALONIANS II. 2.

To the Editor of the Investigator.

Sir,

The common account of the object of the 2nd epistle to the Thessalonians is, that the believers at that place, in consequence of the language used by St. Paul in his *first* epistle to them, had been led to regard the time of the Lord's second Advent as close at hand, and that the apostle wrote the 2nd epistle to caution them against such a belief *as erroneous and dangerous*. Such a supposition is exceedingly strange; since it would cast upon an inspired apostle the charge of writing unguardedly: for an attentive and devout reader of the first epistle could certainly draw no other conclusion from it, than that which the disciples at Thessalonica evidently did; viz. that they were to live in the expectation that the Lord's second Advent *would* take place suddenly and *might* take place at any time: a belief which not only the apostles but our Lord himself constantly enjoined on the Church, as being the state of mind which she ever ought to have maintained towards her absent Bridegroom.

An examination of the epistle in the Greek has convinced me that the object of it was directly the contrary to the one commonly supposed.—Heretics of a similar class with Hymeneus and Philetus had by various means (chap. II. 2) sought to lead the disciples away from the speedy expectation of the Lord's coming to which the apostle exhorted them; endeavouring to make them think that he had deceived them, because the Lord did not return *instantly*. The apostle accordingly writes to guard them against

being led away by these seducers, and to exhort them still to persevere in looking and waiting for their Lord from heaven.

Further, the expression "shaken in mind or troubled," as it stands in our version, is adapted to convey the idea that the anticipation of the Lord's advent created feelings of alarm in the minds of the Thessalonian Christians; whereas we know that the spirit with which the early church contemplated that event was one of eager and joyful expectation.—See 1 Cor. I. 7; Phil. III. 20; 2 Tim. IV. 8; 2 Pet. III. 12.

It is the wrong translation of this 2nd verse which has given rise to the erroneous opinion respecting the object of the epistle itself. Ought not εἰς το μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπο τοῦ νοοῦ—ὥς ὅτι ἐνεστήκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου,—evidently to have been rendered "that ye be not soon *shaken from the opinion—that the day of the Lord is near at hand?*" On referring to Schleusner (*voc νόυς*) I find he renders the passage, in conformity with the translation above given, "*ne vos celeriter cognitione vestra deturbari patiamini.*"

Thus the whole is rendered harmonious and consistent. St. Paul had sought to console them in his 1st epistle, under the bereavements they had experienced, by the prospect of the Saviour's speedy return and the saints' resurrection at that time; a topic which he dwells on with a remarkable frequency in that epistle, there not being a single chapter of it in which the Saviour's *second* advent is not at least once mentioned. Suppose that in the interval which had elapsed before the 2nd epistle was written, some

false teachers had sought to unsettle their faith in this important truth by telling them, either that they had misunderstood the apostle's words, or that he had misled them, since notwithstanding his telling them to live in the constant and speedy expectation of the Lord's appearing, the event had not yet taken place. St. Paul, hearing of this, writes his 2nd epistle to strengthen and confirm their faith on this point; and accordingly, the advent of Christ is brought forward again at the very commencement of this epistle, as a subject of hope and consolation to God's persecuted saints. (See chap. i. vv. 7, 10.) He proceeds: "Now concerning (*ὅτι*) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him, we beseech you, brethren, that ye be not soon shaken from the opinion &c. that the day of Christ is at hand."—Let not the delay that occurs seem great, or cause you to waver or grow cold in your expectation of the great event. He then reveals to them further, that there was an event to take place previous to and on the eve of the Lord's appearing, viz. the revelation of the man of sin; but what was to be the *duration* of the event predicted is not there stated, and therefore they could not tell whether it might not be something which would be transacted in their own days. The reason of the mention of this circumstance in this place appears to be, to warn the church of the fearful trial which awaited it, and to guard them against becoming negligent or doubtful in their expectation of the Lord's return, on account of the apparent delay of it.

With this view the prayer of the apostle in chap. iii. 5, precisely harmonizes:—"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient* waiting for Christ." Instead of being *alarmed* at the

thoughts of his return (as the common translation of chap. ii. 2 seems to indicate) they were rather unduly *anxious* for the instant approach of that day; and the apostle accordingly prays, that they may have grace to *wait* for it and endure their trials with *patience* in the mean while. We find a similar exhortation in James v. 7, 8.

I am your brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,

CLERICUS, M. N. D.

P. S. Believing as I do from the plain evidence of Scripture, that this earth, redeemed from the curse, is to be the future residence of the Lord and his ransomed church, I should be glad to hear what explanation you or any of your correspondents give to the following texts: 2 Cor. v. 1; Hebrews x. 34 and 1 Peter i. 4; also John xiv. 2, 3. Have they a reference to the city which God has prepared for his saints, (Heb. xi. 16), the new Jerusalem which is to *come down from God out of heaven*? Rev. xxi. 2, 10.

[The subject which our respected Correspondent notices is one of considerable interest, and persuaded we are, from the whole tenour of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, that the apostle no where intends to divert them from looking out for the second advent of Jesus, seeing that he directs their attention to it again most decidedly in this second epistle. We doubt however the solution of the difficulty given by CLERICUS M. N. D. Not that the Greek of verse 2 will not bear the interpretation he puts upon it; (for it is the translation of the Vulgate;) but because it does appear to us not so well to agree with the context as if the emphasis were laid on the word *ἐνεσθῆκεν*, which rather affords the solution to it. For does not the error of the Thessalonians seem to

have been, after all, the overlooking the previous apostasy and revelation of the man of sin, and supposing that the advent of Christ, instead of being nigh, and only "withheld" by the necessity of the previous revelation of the man of sin, had arrived, or at least was actually impending—*ενεσθηκεν*? Moreover verse 5 of chap. III. will hardly bear the interpretation given to it by our translators—*εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, is rather—"into the *patience* of Christ," than "into the *patient waiting* for Christ." It evinces however that our Translators thought with M. N. D. that the Thessalonians were certainly not *alarmed* at the thought of the advent; but needed to be exhorted "that it is good for a man both to hope and quietly wait the salvation of the Lord."—*EDITOR.*]

Dear Sir,

I beg to submit, for your investigation, two or three disputed passages in the book of Revelation which appear to me, when interpreted by the analogy of Scripture, so plain and simple, as to create a surprise that there ever should have existed a doubt as to their meaning. I shall begin with—

The Witnesses.

"And I will give power to my two Witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the whole world." Rev. xi. 3, 4.

By the mouth of Isaiah, XLIII. 10, the Lord saith of the *Jews*, "Ye are my witnesses;" and again, v. 12, "Ye are my witnesses that I am God;" and again, chap. XLVIII. 8. "Ye are my witnesses." Thus we have the authority of God himself for calling *the Jewish church* one of His Witnesses. But the Jewish church is considered as the type of *the Gentile church*, and in Canticles iv. 9, and viii. 8, they are called *sisters*; therefore it may be said that *the Gentile church* is the other Witness. To this the words of our Saviour himself agree, who says of the Apostles—and, through them, of the Gentile church—"Ye are Witnesses of these things." (Luke xxiv. 48.) And Peter also,—*"We are his Witnesses of these things."* (Acts v. 32; and x. 39.) It is therefore in perfect accordance with the word of God to call the Jewish and Gentile churches "The Two Witnesses."*

But we have still further proof of this truth if we consider the explanation given of the two Witnesses: "these are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the whole world." In Jeremiah xi. 16, the Jewish church is called "a green olive tree;" and St. Paul, in Rom. xi. calls the Jewish and Gentile churches the good and the wild olive trees. As respects the two candlesticks, we know, from Rev. i. 20, that they represent *churches*.

This scriptural interpretation harmonises with what is written of the

* We fear that the quotations of Nemo from Canticles in support of his view are too ambiguous to be taken as proven: and the words of the Apostle in Acts v and x, are spoken either directly *to* or *of* Jews exclusively. There are however some very able arguments in support of his view in an Essay on this subject contained in the Appendix to *The Resurrection Revealed*, by Dr. Homes. p. 316. (The work was revised and reprinted in the former series of the Investigator; but being now published as a separate work, we fear it is not so well known as it deserves to be.) We give the remaining two heads on the *Harvest* and *Vintage* merely as the view of our Correspondent.—*ED.*

two olive trees, and the candlestick in Zech. iv. There we have the candlestick all of gold, with the bowl upon the top of it, representing the purified general assembly of the first born which are written in heaven, receiving the unction from above. The seven lamps thereon may denote the seven Spirits of God dispensing through the seven pipes (the instruments of God's grace,) life and light in the surrounding darkness of this evil world. The two olive trees by the candlestick, one upon the right side of the bowl and one on the left side thereof, may be the Jewish and Gentile churches; and the Prophet's question rather confirms this, "What are these two olive trees?" and "What be these two olive branches which empty the golden oil out of themselves?"—(Quere: the visible and spiritual Jewish and Gentile churches.)—"These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth;" or, as it is Rev. xi. 4, "standing before the God of the earth;" which coincidence, I conceive, identifies both passages together, viz. that in Zechariah with that in the Revelation.

I shall proceed further to notice—first, the Harvest; and secondly, the Vintage. Both are closely connected, for it is written, "Your threshing shall reach to the Vintage, and the Vintage shall reach to the sowing time."

The Harvest.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle,—for the Harvest of the earth is come." Rev. xiv. 14, 15.

We read that when the Harvest is ripe, that is, when the wickedness and infidelity of the Gentile church is come to the full, immediately

God putteth in the sickle, and the tares and the wheat are both cut down together; the former being first bound in bundles, to be afterwards burnt at Armageddon; and the latter undergoing a threshing, to separate it from the chaff, (professors,) before it is gathered into the garner. The field, as we shall see presently, is the world of the mystical Babylon, the Beast of the Revelation; the Harvest is the end of this age or dispensation, when shall come to pass that which is written in Isaiah and Jeremiah.—"Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken to the ground. O my threshing and the corn of my floor." (Isaiah xxi. 9, 10.) Again, "Thus saith the Lord, I will raise up against Babylon—a destroying wind, and will send fanners to fan her, that shall fan her, (separate the chaff from the wheat,) and shall empty her land.—The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor, it is time to thresh her; yet a little while and the time of her Harvest shall come." (Jeremiah li. 1, 2, 33.) I shall not further occupy your few pages by proving, from other Prophets, what appears so clear, that the Harvest has direct reference to the destruction of Babylon—the Mother of Abominations.—I shall merely observe, what is very remarkable in these our days, that "her spoilers shall come from the north." See Jeremiah li. *passim*.

The threshing of Babylon shall reach to

The Vintage.

Continuing to take Scripture for my guide, I think it will not be difficult to prove that the Vintage has direct reference to the nation of the Jews, when, after hearing the voice "Come out of her *my People*," they shall be gathered for the last time in Palestine, and when God

"will gather all nations against Jerusalem," (Zech. xiv. 2,) where "the wine-press" is reserved for "the day of trouble and treading down."

We know from Isaiah v. that "the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant;" in this vineyard God built a tower, (Jerusalem) and therein "a wine-press." With this key we may easily thus paraphrase Rev. xiv. 19, 20:—"And the Angel thrust in his sickle into the (Roman) earth, and gathered the (Jewish) vine thereof, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, (at Jerusalem) and the wine-press was trodden down *without* the city, (of Babylon) and blood came out of the wine-press, even to the horses' bridles, by the space of 1600 furlongs, (the supposed extent of Palestine:)—according to Zech. xiv—"The city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and *half* the city shall go forth into captivity, and *the residue of the people shall not be cut off* from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations.—And his feet shall stand in *that day* upon the Mount of Olives."

I am, dear Sir,

Nemo.

Dear Sir,

Wishing upon every account that your valuable work should be as free from error as possible, I would suggest to the respective Authors of two Articles in the first number, the subjoined queries.

I am &c., "FUNGAR VICE COTIS, &c."

The Jewish Era.

Page 6. "The Jews reckon that they commenced the year 5996, &c."

Qr. On what authority does this rest? All the almanacks that I have been able to consult state that the Jewish year 5596 ends Sept. 11, 1836. I do not myself know any

thing of the *pros* or *cons* of Chronological computation; but should have concluded the 9 to be a misprint for 5, except that a deduction as to the sixth millenary is founded upon it, &c.

[The above date was hastily copied from a paragraph which appeared in the Record Newspaper of 24th. Sept. 1835, which was as follows—"Tomorrow will be new year's day with the Jews, and will be celebrated by them as a festival, being the commencement of the year 5996 according to the Jewish Era." Our object however was not to urge the Jewish computation, but that of Mr. Clinton, which makes the present year to be 5974 of the world.—ED.]

The Angel of Rev. i. 1.

P. 21, l. 29,—“and lastly, as a fellow servant of St. John and [one] of his brethren, &c.; (Rev. xix. 10) or as he elsewhere calls himself [one] of his brethren, &c. (Rev. xxii. 9.)

Qr. Is not this insertion of [one] a mistranslation? Is not the true construction, that which our Translators appear to have intended: *συνδουλος σου εμι και [συνδουλος] των αδελφων σου*—"I am a fellow servant of thee, and of thy brethren." And so in the other passage, i. e. "I am engaged jointly with thee, and thy brethren, in the service of God."

If "of thy brethren" meant "*one* of"—would not the Greek have been, either *εις των* (John xviii. 22, *et al.* :) or, *εις εκ των* (John xviii. 26, *et al.* :) or simply *εκ των*? (John xvi. 17; Luke xi. 49.)

The (it would seem single) argument, therefore, for the angel employed &c. "being one of the spirits of the just made perfect," falls to the ground. Surely also it is an *assumption*, (and perhaps an unfounded one, but at any rate requiring to be proved;) that the "one of the elders" (chap. vii, 13,)

the "one," "second," "third" and "fourth" living creatures (chap. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7,) the "one of the seven angels, &c." (chap. xvii. 1; xxi. 9,) are all one and the same individual, and also identical with the angel

mentioned chap. xix. 10; xxii. 9; and i. 1: for so Mr. F. would seem to assert. The whole point would not seem of much consequence, except as far as correctness of interpretation of words is concerned.

Review of Books.

(5) *An Analytical Comment on the first part of The Revelation; being an attempt to elucidate both the Historic and Prophetic sense of the Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia.* By HENRY GIRDLESTONE, A. B. Rector of Colton, Norfolk. [Now of Landford, near Salisbury.]

Lond. Hatchard, 1838, 8vo. pp. 212.

Much difference of opinion has existed among the interpreters of the Apocalypse in regard to the character of the Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, which are prefixed to that Book. The first question discussed among them is, whether they are to be considered as prophetic, or merely historical,—i. e. only so far prophetic as they contain warnings of evil and promises of good, which were fulfilled in the first ages of christianity on those particular churches, and which have now therefore become history. This opinion however is compassed about with insuperable objections. For how are we in this case to account for the fact of their being prefixed as an introduction to the Book of Revelation? To account for it as Bishop Halifax, Dr. Johnson of Holywood, and others writers of this class do—by stating, that they were addressed by St. John to the seven churches only for the sake of their better preservation,—is any thing but satisfactory; for the question immediately presents itself, Why were

these seven churches selected more than any others in Asia, as Colosse, Tralles, Magnesia, Hierapolis, which were all flourishing congregations, and were placed either within or upon the circle described by the position of the seven? Why again were these churches of Asia preferred before some of the more influential churches in other parts of the world? And more especially we may ask, Why were these epistles consigned for preservation to churches whose early doom is in some instances foretold in these very epistles, and the long degraded and ruined condition of which evince that they were quite incapable of such a charge?

The more commonly received opinion is that these epistles are *prophetic* in the more extensive sense of the term; i. e. that these churches are but *types*, in whose circumstances is prefigured the condition of the whole church of God at some future period or periods. The exhortation appended to each of the seven epistles—"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"—places beyond a question, that those prophetic warnings, which they do avowedly contain, were not to be understood as of "private interpretation," but were intended for the church of God in all ages.

Another question however arises hence: Do these churches set forth the characteristics of the professing

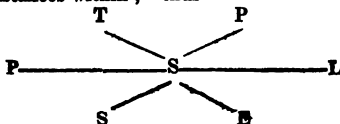
church of God—that portion of it at least in which the truth is preserved,—at one particular period more than another? The great majority of those who treat the epistles to them as prophetic, consider that they describe the state of the church in seven different ages, from the beginning to the end of the Christian dispensation, which periods correspond with the order of the epistles as contained in Rev. II. and III. Hence this class of interpreters have been termed *periodists*. There is however a great want of unanimity in regard to the periods fixed upon, though some are made out with considerable plausibility.

On the whole, though we consider that these Epistles may be *accommodated* in the manner just stated to the circumstances of the church in various successive ages, yet are we disposed to conclude that their *main* design is, to set forth the state of the church at some one particular period of its history, and *that* the period of its great crisis, immediately before and in “the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.” At this time we conceive that there will be found, in different sections or communities of the professing church, characteristics answering to those which are here described; and that there will then be a special need of the exhortations, warnings and promises given to these typical communities of Asia Minor. Our first reason for this con-

clusion is, that the typical churches were all co-existing at the time when the messages were sent; and that all the circumstances to which attention is invited, whether for blame or praise, were to be found within the radius of a hundred miles from Sardis.* Our second reason is, that the promises given to these churches have a special reference to the advent of the Lord and to the glory which is to be revealed in the Millennium. To these reasons we may add two others, which are independent of internal evidence; viz. thirdly, that the early christians (as may be seen in Cyprian ad Quiren. ii. 19) were thus led to conclude that these churches were emblematical of the whole church in their age;—an opinion which has been extended by subsequent writers, who consider that they are designed to describe the circumstances of the church in any age. And our fourth reason is, that it would be no difficult task to point out the parallels to the characteristics given in these epistles in the church at the present day, either already manifested, or beginning to develop themselves, in a very striking manner.

The work of Mr. Girdlestone does not fully coincide with our views in the particulars above named; but we nevertheless consider it a useful publication:—First, because there will be found condensed within its pages all that is valuable in the way of research and erudition, bearing

* The figure described by the position of these churches, if it were outlined, would form an ellipsis rather than a circle; and it is curious that they are placed in the shape of a candlestick and its branches, (of not an unusual figure,) which is adopted as the symbol of them in the Apocalypse; Sardis being the centre, Pergamos and Laodicea being at the two extreme verges of the oval, forming a long branch, and the other four at nearly regular distances within;—thus



on the opinions of the periodists;—more particularly of that class of them who held, as the esteemed Author does, that these epistles are intended in the first instance for the use of the seven churches of Asia, as much as the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians was first intended for *their* use; that they are applicable in like manner to the universal church; and that in addition to this they are prophetically descriptive of the character of the church in seven different periods.—And, secondly, we approve the work, because, in his application of the four last epistles the Author actually adopts our view, and brings them within the period of these last times. For he considers that there is a designed division of the time and circumstances of the church indicated in the fourth epistle, by the alteration in the command of attention; which, instead of preceding the promise, as in the case of the three former epistles, is here reversed; thus dividing the seven into two classes. A division is further marked by the clause “*and keepeth my works unto the end,*” which is peculiar to this epistle only; and this points, as the Author supposes, to that apocalyptic end or goal, *the coming of the Lord*: in addition to which the promises of that coming, in this and the remaining epistles, are now unconditional and unreserved.

There are other considerations which lead us to attach a value to this work; but we must now proceed to notice the reasons stated by Mr. Girdlestone for assuming that the epistles are prophetic, which may be summed up as follows:—First, from the title of the *whole* book, which is a revelation of events, “which must quickly come to pass,” or a *prophecy* in the strictest sense of the term; and that it should start aside, immediately after the announcement of its main design,

to treat of matters that are merely moral, and not at all prophetic, seems not to be consistent. Secondly, it appears unaccountable that these epistles should be addressed—not to the whole church,—nor to the more eminent churches of the known world, as Antioch, Alexandria, &c.—nor even to all the churches of Asia; but only to these; as if the Lord were exclusively occupied in the superintendence and protection of them,—walking only among *their* lamp stands, and holding in his hand only *their* stars. This can only be explained on the supposition that they are selected as *typical* of the whole. A third argument is derived from the manner in which the Scriptures are wont to speak of certain persons and places sometimes figuratively only, but at other times more or less typically: as in Isa. i. 10; xxii. 22; Ezek. xxxvii. 24; similar instances of which may be found in chaps. ii. 20; iii. 7 and xi. 8 of this Book. And, lastly, an argument is derived from the frequent use of *the number seven*, more especially in the typical economy of Moses. The reason of this is supposed by the Author to be derived from the great work of creation, itself a type of the new and greater creation, brought to perfection in the entire space of seven successive periods: “whence, primarily, the idea of entire and *perfect time* would naturally be connected with any seven successive periods, greater or less; and secondarily, the idea of a *perfect work*, accomplished in any time whatever, would not unnaturally be connected with the same number.” The Author farther appeals to the external evidence derived from the subsequent history of the church, which he conceives has exhibited in succession those characteristics which are described in these epistles.

The periods thus typified in the several Epistles are as follow.—*Ephesus*, from the Apostolic age to the reign of Decius, A. D. 250;—*Smyrna*, from Decius until the reign of Constantine;—*Pergamos*, from Constantine to the age of Luther;—*Thyatira*, from Luther to the revocation of the edict of Nantz;—*Sardis*, from thence to the æra of the British and Foreign Bible Society; *Philadelphia*, from the last named æra (which he considers commensurate with the *revival* of the church in its reformed state,) until the beginning of a second *relapse*, “from whatever epoch that relapse may hereafter appear to be dated;”—and *Laodicea*, from that relapse and coldness unto the coming of the Lord to his millennial reign, whatsoever that reign may be. To use the words of the Author,—“These several periods embrace all the great successive changes which the spiritual Church has undergone, or will undergo, previous to that reign. They embrace the primitive zeal which founded and the spirit of martyrdom which cemented the fabric of the Church; the struggling perseverance of the little band which through all the darkness of the middle ages wrestled with the nominal but apostate church; the battle fought and won by the Reformers; the collapse of the reformed church; its late revival; and its future indifference.”

These several periods however, do not appear to us to be made out with those broad features of distinctiveness which immediately extort an acknowledgment of the likeness. In regard to the first period the Author admits, that, notwithstanding the zeal of the first Christians against heresy, yet toward the latter part of the period they had left their first love; and he leaves us to infer of the *second period*, that this *declension* was going

forward, and that it arrived at its crisis, insomuch that its *era* may be dated from the reign of Dioclesian, in which the church was persecuted; and he quotes Milner to shew, “that here terminated or nearly so, as far as appears, that first great effusion of the Spirit of God which began at the day of Pentecost.” It happens, however, that there is no allusion to any declension at all in the *second* Epistle, which is to the church of Smyrna: for the Lord instead of saying to it, as in the case of the previous church of Ephesus—“I have somewhat against thee”—deals with it as if it were altogether a blameless community. The Author is happier however in regard to the *ten days of tribulation*, which was to come upon the church of Smyrna to prove them, and which was certainly a distinctive feature of that which he makes his *second period*. He considers that it was, in the type, of a merely local and literal nature; but in regard to its larger accomplishment in the holy catholic church, he says:—

“It may be laid down as a principle, disputed indeed by some, but without good reason, that as God himself, both in the law and the prophets, (especially Numb. xiv. 34, and Ezek. iv. 6,) has used the period of *a day*, to be the figurative representative of *a year*, we therefore are not only allowed but *invited* to understand that term in the figurative language of prophecy in the same sense. The context must decide the occasion of applying the principle; but the principle itself is sound: a *day*, like a year, is a revolution, *εναυρος*: the lesser revolution may be understood *literally* of the less event, and the greater revolution *figuratively* of the greater event. Upon this principle of interpretation we discover here an express prediction of the Diocletian persecution, which being the last and the worst, and therefore fitly singled out to represent them all, raged exactly ten years;—viz. from A. D. 403, to 413. (Eus. Hist. Ec. viii. 15, 16; Lactant. c. 48. Prot. vii. 25.)” P. 105.

Again, in regard to the third period, the Author quotes from the

marginal notes of the Rhemish New Testament the following passage :—“ The special residence of Satan is, where the faithful are persecuted for Christ's truth ;”—for the purpose of turning it against the Romanist who penned it, and applying verses 13, 14 of the message to the church of Pergamos to the persecutions of the faithful by the *Papists*. But the same feature would equally apply to *Pagan* times, in which believers were as extensively persecuted, and yet held fast the faith of Christ, and denied not his name.

Part of the message to Thyatira appears also strained in its application. Jezebel seducing the servants of Christ to commit fornication and to eat of idol sacrifices, is explained by the reformed and evangelical churches being occupied with disputes among themselves, during which they left the Romish church (the antitypical Jezebel) at large to deceive the Lord's servants. The rebuke however to Thyatira evidently applies to some *deliberately permitted* heresy or abuse of doctrine ; that church being led, by some principle akin perhaps to modern liberalism, to consider that it was most expedient to let this Jezebel alone, and therefore viewed her with indifference ; which was not the case with the Reformers, as regards the church of Rome.

The three remaining periods appear to us more happily applied ; but it is because they are assigned to our own times, or to the prospect immediately before us. For the complaint against Sardis, that the things which remained were ready to die, was and still is peculiarly appropriate in a great majority of instances ; where we see the doctrine of the Reformers lost sight of, and the principles of those holy men at length treated as the result of bigotry and intolerance. The revival, in certain sections of the church, of the spirit

of religion, evinces that some have the Philadelphian spirit ; whilst the lukewarm condition of many others, which is so greatly increasing, shews the Laodicean spirit also to be applicable, and that we are hastening to those times, if not already arrived at them, of which our Lord said,—“ Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold.”

In conclusion, we do not think that there is upon the whole much difference between our own view and that of the esteemed friend who is the author of this work.—We are disposed to concede that a reference to successive periods *may* be designed in these Epistles, in addition to what we conceive to be their principal prophetic relation, viz. to the circumstances of the last times of the Church. And he admits (at p. 174 distinctly) of the four latter churches, “ that the church in the end of this present dispensation shall be found to assume a *fourfold* character of a mixed Thyatiran, Sardian, Philadelphian and Laodicean spirit.” We only require the principle here recognised to be extended, and to apply these epistles as types of the *sevenfold* character of the Church in the last days.

Among the most important features of the work of Mr. Girdlestone is that wherein he points out the connexion, more or less obvious, which exists between the argument of all these epistles, and the subsequent visions of the prophecy ; and so confirms the view of their prophetic sense : and that wherein he points out, that the doctrine of the premillennial and personal advent of the Lord is confirmed by these Epistles, in their measure. But we cannot do justice to these particulars without greatly exceeding our limits, and therefore must refer the Reader to the work itself.

(6) *A Dissertation on the Prophetic Scriptures, chiefly those of a Chronological character; shewing their aspect on the present times, and on the destinies of the Jewish nation. Illustrated by two charts. The whole intended as a complete elementary work to the study of Chronological Prophecy.*—By M. HABERSHON.

London. Nisbet and Co. 8vo. pp. 478. 12s.

We have been much interested in the perusal of the above work. Those who are acquainted with the various interpretations of the chronological prophecies, which have been put forth by able and eminent expositors, must be aware that even the most modern and popular writers, as Faber, Cuninghame and Frere, differ from each other in regard to some of the epochs from which they date particular events; whilst at the same time the arguments which they severally bring forward appear convincing to their respective partisans, and not altogether to be despised by those even who may chiefly follow the system of a rival. A principle therefore of interpretation that will tend to harmonize some of the more important dates, which have been fixed upon by writers who are seemingly opposed in this matter, challenges the serious attention of the student of prophecy. If that principle be correct in itself, and properly applied, then we may conclude, that many serious discrepancies which are observable in the systems of different interpreters, and which have so much perplexed and disheartened the inquirer,—instead of being a sufficient ground for rejecting them *all*, on the supposition that none can be right,—is no more than we ought reasonably to have expected from the nature of the case, when we consider that the Lord has only gradually and partially unfolded the subject of prophecy to his church, so that none

have been enabled at once to discover the truth in this matter in every aspect and in all its bearings.

Mr. Habershon's principal and more important proceeding is, to examine into the peculiarities of those chronological periods mentioned in the Old Testament which are avowedly fulfilled; the first of which is the sojourning of the children of Israel and their affliction in Egypt; which in Gen. xv. 12—14, is declared to be *four hundred years*, (see also Acts vii. 6, 7;) and in Exodus, is declared to be *four hundred and thirty years*; see also Gal. iii. 17. The former period is dated from 1921 B. C. to 1491 B. C., and the latter from 1891 B. C. to 1491 B. C. In this period the author notices the following points; 1st, that two durations are assigned to it—viz. 400 and 430 years; secondly, that their commencement is at separate times; thirdly, that they have one common termination; fourthly, that the exact time of their commencement and consequent accomplishment could only have been known with certainty after the deliverance from Egypt had taken place; and lastly, that the time neither of the first nor second commencement was to be dated from the time the prophecy was given. On this last point the author has the following judicious observation:—

“The date generally assigned to the transactions between the Lord and Abraham, recorded in Genesis xv. when this chronological prophecy was given, is the year B. C. 1913, or 1911, which falls in between the two actual commencements. If it were known to the children of Israel during the time of their bondage, they would most probably have calculated the termination from this time, which would have brought it 20 or 22 years before it actually transpired; and this circumstance might probably add to the hopelessness of their situation. But as a divine promise cannot fail, although man's expectations may for a time be disappointed and his

calculations be made from an erroneous datum, and things for a time may appear to be getting worse instead of better; yet it is well never to forget, "that God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it?" It hath pleased him to throw a certain degree of obscurity around the clearest revelations he hath made respecting future events, particularly as it regards times and seasons; yet is there nothing uncertain or indefinite." P. 97.

The next example which is noticed is to be found in Isaiah vii. 1—9, and comprehends a period of "*three score and five years*" from the time when Ahaz king of Judah was threatened with destruction by the confederate kings of Syria and Israel to the "breaking" or final overthrow of the kingdom of Israel; from B. C. 742, to B. C. 677. "*But for this apparently insignificant date, (the author observes,) the destruction of the kingdom of Israel would have been, as it generally is, considered to have happened on the invasion of Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria: whereas it is certain, that, according to this date, it did not take place till forty or fifty years afterwards.*"—"*Thus accurately fixed is the period when ten out of the twelve tribes were carried captive and made outcasts from their own land: and thus accurately are we furnished with a datum from whence to calculate the chronological prophecies connected with their restoration!*" (P. 111.) As proof that the country was not wholly stripped of its inhabitants in the time of Shalmanezzer, Mr. Habershon refers to certain particulars in the history of Josiah which was subsequent to that period: see 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 7, 33; xxxv. 18; and 2 Kings xxiii. 19.

The next period is that of the Babylonish captivity mentioned in Jer. xxv. 8—12, and xxix. 10; and refers more especially to Judah and Benjamin. The author shews

this to be a *two-fold* period; viz. from the captivity of Judah in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, to the decree of Cyrus, B. C. 606 to 536; and from the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, to the decree of Darius Hystaspes, B. C. 588 to 518. These two periods are thus reconciled by Dr. Prideaux. (Connex. Vol. I. p. 254.)

"*Both computations may well stand together*: for though the Babylonish captivity did begin from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar first subjugated the land, and carried away to Babylon the first captives; yet it was not completed till he had absolutely destroyed it, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, which was just eighteen years after. And so likewise, though the deliverance from this captivity, and the restoration of the Jewish state thereon, was begun at the decree of Cyrus, in the first year of his reign; yet it was not completed till that decree was put in full vigour of execution by the decree which Darius granted in the fourth year of his reign for the confirmation of it, which was also just eighteen years after. And therefore if we reckon from the beginning of the captivity to the beginning of the restoration, we must reckon from the fourth year of Jehoiakim to the first year of Cyrus, which was just seventy years: and if we reckon from the completion of the captivity to the completion of the restoration, we must reckon from the eleventh year of Zedekiah to the fourth of Darius, which was also just seventy years." (Connex. Vol. I. p. 254.)

Mr. Habershon here observes "that it is the more important that this peculiarity should be well understood, as he considers it may legitimately be applied in the explanation of other similar but unfilled prophecies. For if, in an event which is unquestionably a type of the church's spiritual deliverance from Babylon, there were confessedly two commencements and two terminations of the predicted period of captivity, there can be no hesitation in applying the above principles, if the difficulties and necessities of the case call for it, to its *antitype*, or to

the more remarkable deliverance of the same people, which is yet to take place, from their last and heaviest captivity, &c.—It is reasonable to suppose that one period of prophecy should, in some respects, be analogous to that of another; and hence, that if in one prophecy there should be two commencements and two terminations, the same may be found to be the case also in others.” (P, 123.)

The last period noticed by the author is the *seventy weeks* or 490 years dated from the edict of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, given to Ezra, to the death of Christ, from B. C. 457 to A. D. 33. There is nothing particularly worthy of observation noticed of this period, in a chronological point of view, excepting that, like the first and third periods brought forward, the time of its commencement could only be correctly ascertained when its termination had either actually taken place, or was approaching to it; and that the commencement of its fulfilment is not reckoned from the time the prophecy of each was given. The difficulties which attend the right application of the scriptural division of these seventy weeks are well known, by all who have at all considered or read upon the subject: we notice them for the sake of quoting a judicious observation of the Author thereupon:—“If such difficulties still surround the true and proper interpretation of a *fulfilled* prophecy, which has engaged, during the whole period of the Christian era, the best attention and study of so many learned men, it ought to be no matter of surprise if equal difficulties are found connected with others, where, from the circumstances of their being *unfulfilled*, equal advantages are not enjoyed.” (P. 158.)

Such are the peculiarities which

our Author notices: there are indeed one or two others which he considers important, which, as they serve to keep his subsequent interpretation within a more rigid limit, it may be well to notice. There is, first, that all the events that have marked the commencement and termination of each period have formed the most important *eras* in history: as the call of Abraham, the Exodus, the final ruin of the kingdom of Israel, the captivity of Judah, their deliverance, the restoration of the Jewish church under Ezra, (for the importance of which era, in the view of the author, we must refer to his work,) and, finally, the death of Christ, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Secondly, these events have always had a special respect to the affairs of the *Church*, and have never exclusively related to *secular* concerns. Thirdly, they have been characterized by *change*: i. e. they have marked all the great and extraordinary changes through which it hath pleased God that his church should pass whilst under the Levitical dispensation. Fourthly, they have proved the *ruin* of the respective nations to whom they have related, as Canaan, Egypt, Babylon, and Israel and Judah. It may farther be noticed, that a greater or less degree of obscurity rests upon each prophetic period, according as circumstances have required that they should be concealed for a greater or less time.

Such are the principles or axioms which the Author discovers; and the work is well worthy of a perusal if it be only to observe the manner in which he makes them out, and duly to consider his grounds for them. His *application* of these principles to unfulfilled prophecy is a different concern: the foundation on which he builds may be sound and

sufficient, even though the super-structure reared upon it should prove faulty. So far as our own opinion is concerned, we candidly confess that we are not prepared to go with Mr. Habershon in *all* that he advances in the way of interpretation. He appears to us in some instances to give the rein too much to his imagination, and the obvious flaws which are thus created in *parts* of his exposition have a necessary tendency to create in some persons a feeling of insecurity in the whole. At the same time, we are bound to acknowledge that the mass of evidence, and the remarkable coincidences with which he strengthens some of his points, amount to all but demonstration; and that the arguments adduced for the generality of his prophetic periods are worthy of the most serious consideration. We wish our limits would allow us to give an out outline of all these, but we can only enter upon two of them.

The first application of the principle is to the *seven times* during which Israel was to be punished and to fall under Gentile domination, and which therefore is supposed to be the same as "the times of the Gentiles." The period itself has more of plausibility than reality, and rests rather upon hypothesis than upon any rigid principle of critical investigation. Mede based it on the fact that the "time, times, and half a time" of Daniel vii. is evidently the *moiety* of *seven times*, and therefore he concluded it to have reference to such a period, and that its commencement formed the bisecting point of the seven times. Mr. Habershon considers the foundation to be farther strengthened by the frequent mention of the phrase *seven times* in Lev. xxvi. in connexion with the threatened punishment of Israel—"I will punish you

seven times more for your sins."

The expression has not in the original, nor obviously in the translation, any thing to do with duration of time, but refers only to the increased intensity of God's chastisements. Mr. Habershon is aware of this; but his arguments for nevertheless insisting upon it are ingenious.

This period then of *seven times* has two special peculiarities: viz. first, that it admits of a *double application*, (i. e. to the kingdom of Israel, and also to the kingdom of Judah,) and secondly, that each of these applications has a *double commencement and double termination*. The first two-fold application to the kingdom of Israel he dates from its final destruction to its restoration; which he calculates as follows: from B. C. 727, when Shalmaneser carried away Israel into captivity, to A. D. 1793; and again from B. C. 677, when Esarhaddon finally extinguished the kingdom, to A. D. 1843; each of which periods are of 2520 years duration. Besides this, the Author conceives the probability still farther increased by a chronological correspondence which he imagines he perceives between the great national shocks which preceded, portended, and hastened Israel's and Judah's fall and captivity, and those which portend to hasten their deliverance and the downfall of the nations by which they have been oppressed. This he points out in six particular instances; (see p. 204.) but for the proof of these, and for the signs of the times which are very strikingly, impressively, and practically set forth, we must refer to the work itself.

The second application of this period to the kingdom of Judah is dated from the dethronement of the house of David, and again from the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, to the Millennium: i. e. from B. C.

677 to A. D. 1843; and from B. C. 602 to A. D. 1918; both periods again continuing for 2520 years. In regard to the first period the Author observes, "that as the perpetual grant of the *land* secures the restoration of Israel as an united people to their country; so the perpetual grant of the *throne*, confined to the tribe of Judah, (2 Sam. vii. 13, 16; Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4, 35—37) secures to the house of David the restoration of all its royal honours and dignity. It is to this that the prophecy of "seven times" must have a reference as it regards Judah; because, for purposes essentially connected with the first coming of Christ, it cannot have a reference to their dispersion, as they were, after 70 years captivity in Babylon, restored to their own land for above 500 years." He considers therefore that the perfection of calamity, as applied to the tribe of Judah, consists, in addition to their other complicated sufferings, in the loss of their *regal* honours, which after 2520 years shall be again restored.

We pass by the 2300 years of Daniel viii. which he dates from the edict of the seventh year of Artaxerxes given to Ezra, B. C. 457, to the cleansing of the sanctuary which he supposes will be A. D. 1843,—and notice finally the great prophetic period of 1260 years, which under different expressions is mentioned no less than *seven times* in the prophecies of Daniel and St. John. These various expressions Mr. Habershon conceives to be significant, and supposes them to relate to separate and distinct subjects, all of which are nevertheless involved in the period of 1260 years. He considers it therefore under *three distinct aspects*: the first, which is thrice expressed by *THREE TIMES AND A HALF*, having respect to *Poverty, as it appears under the actual*

dominion of the Pope himself;—the second, twice expressed by *FORTY TWO MONTHS*, having reference to the *tyrannical dominion of the ten papal kingdoms*;—the third, which is twice expressed by "*ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND THREE-SCORE DAYS*," having reference to the *depressed condition of the church of Christ*. He further considers, that the mention of 1290 days, and 1335 days, in Dan. xii. 11, 12, in apparent connexion with, and as an apparent extension of, the 1260 days, indicates that this period has *three durations* assigned to it. And to these he adds a double commencement and a double corresponding termination; the necessity for which, will be apparent in those instances in which the commencement of the 1260 years corresponds with the latter moiety of the 2520 years. For if the whole seven times has two commencements and two terminations, so must either *half* of that period correspond with it.

He dates the first then, from the giving the saints into the hands of the papal power, A. D. 533, to the inchoative fall of that apostasy A. D. 1793; and again from the formation of the ten papal kingdoms A. D. 583, to their destruction, which he expects will be in 1843; both which periods contain 1260 years. And from the latter epoch, viz. A. D. 583 he dates the 1290 years expiring in 1873, and the 1335 years, which will expire A. D. 1918, which is the same date as the expiration of his *fifth* period, in its application to the throne of David and the tribe of Judah.

We regret that our limits preclude us from entering into farther particulars, and have compelled us to be so brief in what we have brought forward. We could have wished else to have exhibited the Author's view of the *seals*, which symbol he conceives is itself to be considered

as having a meaning, and to refer to events to which is attached the *seal of empire*, indicated by some signal decree or marked incident declarative of the ratification of the event by imperial power. He confines himself to events of this nature; and embraces in his treatment of the subject most of the principal decrees which have been brought forward by expositors of prophecy. This feature of the book we should have brought forward, not as approving or disapproving, but for the

sake of better acquainting the Reader with the character of Mr. Habershon as an expositor; for which purpose likewise, some two or three other *novelties* in the work ought to have been adduced. But whatever impression these might have made upon him (and *some* of them we consider, as we have intimated, to be defects, rather than beauties,) yet are they but as a few cracked panes of glass in a large window, which nevertheless admits much light and is otherwise useful.

New Publications.

"COME AND SEE."—The Publication announced in our last under this Title as suspended, will still be proceeded with if the Writer can obtain a sufficient number of Subscribers to warrant the Publication; but a Pamphlet having been published already by another person under the above Title, it has been necessary to change the title of this, which will be—"VISIONS OF THE ISLE; or, *Original Studies of the Revelation of St. John.*" The work is by the writer of the articles signed H. S. L. in the former volumes of the Investigator, and will be about 4s. 6d. in price. We shall be happy to send orders for the work, or any communication calculated to strengthen the writer's hands, if addressed to us, *post paid*, through our Publishers. The view of H. S. L. respecting the Two Witnesses may be consulted as one specimen of the system of interpretation to be adopted: see the Investigator, Vol. III. p. 217 and 311.

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Original Essays.

INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

(Continued from page 144.)

"THE THINGS WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER."

Having already considered the two first parts of the three-fold division of the Apocalypse made by our Lord, chap. 1. 19, viz. the manifestation of himself to the Apostle John; and the hortatory epistles addressed to the seven churches of Asia; we are now arrived at the third, last, and most considerable portion of the book, and that which alone, strictly speaking, can be called *prophetic*, as is indicated by its particular title, "*the things which must be hereafter*,"—or rather, according to the literal rendering of the words, "what must be *after these things*," or will succeed in point of time to the then present condition of the churches referred to in chapters II and III.

We have already found in the preceding epistles a broad and striking recognition of the two characters of Christ as Priest and King, these being made respectively the peculiar subjects of the fifth and sixth. And we find it again in the portion of the book now about to be considered; for it consists of two distinct parts,—first, that having reference to the regal character of Christ as the Creator and Governor of the world, viz. the history of the kingdoms of this world, or of the Roman empire, (as distinguished into its Western and Eastern branches;)—and, secondly, that having reference to his character as Priest and Redeemer, viz. the history of the Church, distinguished also during its first period, (that is as long as the eastern church existed,) into the separate histories of the eastern and

western churches. Of these two great prophetic subjects, (viz. the civil and the ecclesiastical histories of the Roman empire,) the former will be found to occupy chapters IV. to x. 7, together with xv. xvi. and xvii. to xxi. 8; and the latter to occupy the remainder of the Apocalypse, viz. chapters x. 9 to xiv. xv. xvi. and xxi. 9 to the end; each consisting of a principal history, (including the common supplement of chaps. xv. xvi.) followed by an explanation, or addition of further particulars given by the attendant angel. Thus this interesting volume, so simple in its objects and construction, resembles some of our best general histories, in which that of each kingdom, or territorial division, and the political and ecclesiastical subjects, (perhaps also the legal, commercial, &c.) are treated of separately. We shall find moreover that as prophecy is but history anticipated, so the laws and principles of all other historical writings are maintained in this book; the first and most important of which is that of chronological arrangement, from which there is no deviation otherwise than, as it sometimes happens in the history of past events, that matter which cannot for some cause be conveniently introduced into the body of a work, is placed at the end of it in the form of a note or supplement; the chronological principle being in fact still maintained by a reference being made to it where it is to be introduced into the main body of the history. Of this we

have an instance in the account of the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath, containing the seven last plagues, (Rev. xv. xvi.) which belonging equally to the histories of each branch of the empire and to that of the church, (for these judgments affect at once the whole three,) is, in order to prevent that threefold repetition of its events which must otherwise have been made, thus treated; being placed as a supplement at the end of the last, or the church history, and referred to from chap. vi. 17; x. 2, 3; and xi. 15—19, the three places in each separate history into which it is to be chronologically introduced. We shall find also that prophetic intimations (which need not however be pointed out otherwise than as they shall occur in the course of our interpretation) are given, when each of the distinct histories of the Apocalypse are brought to a conclusion, as clear and unquestionable as if it were verbally written—‘Here ends such and such a history.’ In the same manner, and with the same precautions taken to prevent chronological error in the interpretation, there are also two instances in the course of the book (where the various characters of the events to be narrated render it necessary,) of the same period being twice gone over in the same history; and one of what might rather be called an overlapping of the parts of it; as when, in order to avoid interrupting the thread of any distinct narrative, (here that of the *two witnesses*) it is first brought to a conclusion, and then a return back for a short period is made to take up again and pursue the general course of the history; and as it would be in any other writing, so also in this prophecy, all chronological error is guarded against by an intimation being given of the fact of such a return. It will therefore be

seen that these instances instead of constituting breaches of the chronological principle, only serve to shew the exceeding care with which it is maintained throughout the whole book.

There is one remarkable feature also in which the Apocalypse agrees with the other historical prophecies; viz. in having its visions concluded by an interpretation or explanation of farther particulars given by an attendant angel. This is the case with the visions of Zechariah, each of which is explained by an angel, who is represented as talking with him: see chap. i. 9—17 and 19—21; ii. 3, &c.; iv. 4, &c.; v. 5, &c.; vi. 4—8. But it is still more apparent in the visions of Daniel, in which, as in other cases, it is given to the person who sees the vision by him who is appointed to execute the prophetic office of teacher: that of the vision of the Great Image, seen by Nebuchadnezzar, commencing with these words, spoken by Daniel himself, (chap. ii. 36,) “This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.”—That of the vision of the Four Beasts seen by Daniel commencing thus (chap. vii. 15, 16) “I Daniel ‘was grieved in my spirit, and the ‘visions of my head troubled me, I ‘came near unto one of them” (one of the angels) “who stood by, and ‘asked him the truth of all this; so ‘he told me, and made me know ‘the interpretation of the things.”—That of the vision of the ram and the he-goat being as follows: (chap. viii. 15) “And it came to pass, ‘when I, even I Daniel, had seen ‘the vision and sought for the meaning, then behold there stood before ‘me as the appearance of a man, ‘(viz. the angel Gabriel,) and I ‘heard a man’s voice between the ‘banks of Ulai, (viz. the voice of ‘Christ, who had thus previously

' manifested himself to Daniel) which
' called and said, Gabriel, make this
' man to understand the vision."
—And lastly, the brief explanation
of farther particulars of "that which
' is noted in the Scripture of truth"
commencing with these words, (Dan.
xii. 8) "And I heard, but I under-
' stood not. Then said I," (to the
angel who was sent to shew him the
vision, as related in Dan. x. 11—21.)
"O my Lord what shall be the end
of these things?"

The interpretations,—or rather,
(as they in fact are,) the explanations
of *farther particulars* relating to the
two great prophetic subjects of the
civil and ecclesiastical histories of
the Roman empire,—are no less de-
cidedly marked in the Apocalypse
than in these prophecies of Daniel;
the first of them commencing at
Rev. xvii. 1, with the following
words, "And there came one of the
' seven angels, which had the seven
' vials, and talked with me, saying
' unto me, Come hither, I will shew
' unto thee, &c." And the second
commencing at Rev. xxi. 9 with a
repetition of the same words. The
construction of the visions of Daniel
and those of the Apocalypse differ
only in this respect, that intervals
of many years occurring between
the several dates when the former
were seen, each is naturally and of
course followed immediately by its
own interpretation; whereas the
three distinct prophetic histories of
the Apocalypse, making together but
one complete revelation, and being
all seen during the same "Lord's
day," and with a short interval of
time only occurring between them,
termed in chap. viii. 1, "about the
space of half an hour," the three
main histories come first by them-

selves,* and the three explanatory
histories conclude the book,† occur-
ring in the same relative order of
succession as the three main histories
to which they respectively belong.

Having thus given a view of the
general features and character of
this book of historical prophecy, and
shewn how it agrees with the pre-
cedent of all other histories, and all
other historical prophecies, I proceed
at once, without farther observation,
with the object which I endeavour
to keep continually in view; viz.
that of giving a plain, popular, and
straight-forward interpretation of
the volume, and first of that portion
of it which contains—

THE HISTORY OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE,

consisting of Rev. iv. to vii. (xv.
xvi.) and xvii. to xix. 10, commu-
nicated by the voices of the Cheru-
bim "as the noise of thunder."

Of the portion of the prophecy
above specified chapters iv. and v.
constitute what is usually found at
the commencement of other works,
—a preface, respecting which, con-
sidering that the history of the east-
ern empire, that also of the Church,
and the common supplement of Rev.
xvi. are each preceded by a partial
one, (as is customary at the com-
mencement of any separate division
or chapter of a book in order to
state its contents,) it becomes neces-
sary to enquire in the first place,
whether this is a preface solely be-
longing to the history of the western
branch of the empire, or may be
considered to belong to both branches
of the empire taken together as dis-
tinguished from the church history,
or is not rather, on the other hand,
a common and general preface to

* 1st. Rev. iv to vii.—2ndly. Rev. viii to x. 7.—3rdly. Rev. x. 8, to xiv.; to-
gether with the common supplement of Rev. xv. xvi.

† 1st. Rev. xvii to xix. 10.—2ndly. Rev. xix. 11, to xxi. 8.—3rdly. Rev. xxi.
9, to xxii.

the whole three histories which unitedly constitute "the things which must be hereafter." Upon which question I observe, that as all these things taken together form one of the three parts into which the Apocalypse is primarily divided at chap. i. 19, it is most natural to consider the preface, by which this new portion of the prophecies is introduced, as referring to the whole of it. Again, we have to consider that the seven sealed book (the delivery of which into the hand of Christ, that it might be opened by him, forms the subject of this preface,) refers to the totality of future time, considered as divided into seven successive periods, commencing from that of the first seal; it is most natural therefore, as it is most in accordance with the sublimity of the description of this act, to consider it as containing also the totality of those events of time which are about to be revealed; and this becomes indubitable when we consider, lastly, that there is no other act of revelation than the opening of its seven seals, mentioned in the whole book. The voices of the Cherubim as the noise of thunder,—the voices of the seven angels which stand before God, as the sound of a trumpet, which are successively heard by St. John,—and the act of his eating the little open book, which he is directed by the angel who shews him the vision to take out of the hand of our Lord,—being only so many various means by which the revelations thus opened by the sole power of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," or of "the Lamb that had been slain," are farther communicated by the church in heaven to the prophet John, that he may be qualified to impart them in like manner to his brethren of the church on earth. It will be manifest therefore from these observations, that I consider the

custom of using the term "*the seals*," as describing a portion of the prophecy distinct either from the trumpets or from the little open book, to be entirely incorrect; these latter portions of the prophecy being in fact as much a part of "the revelation of the seven seals" as is the former to which this name is usually appropriated.

The true description of the acts of revelation and communication I consider to be, that by the opening of the several seals or prophetic periods of time the events of them were revealed to the church in heaven equally as they affected either branch of the Roman empire; but after having been so simultaneously revealed, according to the manner in which all general and complicated histories are narrated by their authors, the events relating to its western branch are first communicated to the Apostle by the Cherubim or glorified spirits of the church in heaven with voices resembling "the noise of thunder;" and then the same seven periods of revelation are again travelled over, and the events that had been revealed as to occur during each of them in its eastern branch are communicated in a distinct series by the seven angels who stand before God, (which is but another designation of the church in heaven,) with voices resembling the sound of a trumpet; which view, when we come to their minute examination, we shall find confirmed by the fact, that the events of the first seal and trumpet terminate before those of the second seal and trumpet commence; and these again before those of the third seal and trumpet commence, and so with the rest. The events relating to the church were also opened and revealed by Christ in the act of opening the events of the seven periods or totality of time; on which account

we find them presented to the Apostle in the form of a little open book : the reason they are not equally communicated to him in the form of a division into seven periods being, that the times of the church are universally derived, not, like the regal times and periods, from the essential perfection of numbers, but from the natural year, and its division into months and days.

Being now therefore enabled to define the subject of our present investigation, as contained in chapters iv and v, to be a general preface to the whole of the subsequent revelation called "the things which must be hereafter," or which shall follow upon the termination of the pagan persecutions of the primitive church, we are prepared to endeavour to interpret the symbolical language in which it is written ; upon which subject it will be necessary however that I should previously remark, and in connexion with the observation I have already made, that for the arrangement of this book we must look to the precedent of other histories, that a similar rule here applies, and that we must also look for the interpretation of its symbols to the figures used in other books of Scripture, or in other historical and poetical writings : symbolical language being most properly defined, as highly figurative and poetical language ; so that when the same events which are described in the Apocalypse are found narrated in the works of a poetical writer of history, (and we might mention as a suitable instance the life of Napoleon by Walter Scott,) the probability is that they will be found also described under the same symbols, or as they may be termed with equal propriety, the same poetical images. The supposed difficulty of interpreting the symbols of the Apocalypse will thus

be seen to be rather imaginary than real ; and one for instance frequently adverted to, viz. that of deciding whether a symbolical expression is to be interpreted literally or figuratively, must be, to say the least, vastly exaggerated : for though such a case may certainly be supposed, it can hardly be expected to occur in actual experience, that in reading either past or future history the context of any particular expression shall not enable us to decide in which of these two senses it is intended to be understood. With these two rules therefore set before us as to the simplicity of the principles according to which we are to arrange the matter of this prophecy, and also to interpret its symbols, we proceed to consider first

THE GENERAL PREFACE TO "THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER."

CHAPTERS IV. AND V.

Chap. iv. v. 1. The apostle tells us, that, after having received and recorded the communications addressed by Christ to the seven Churches in Asia, he looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven. This, like the opening of a seal, was itself an act of revelation : for being in the spirit, as before stated in chap. i. 10, and receiving now fresh accessions of spiritual influence, heavenly things were at once laid open to his view, as to St. Stephen in his last favoured moments, when he said, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." He then heard, as the *first* of the many voices which afterwards met his ear, the voice of the angel, or glorified spirit, a member of the church in heaven, by whom Christ sent and signified to him these visions, "*as it were the voice of a trumpet talking with him, saying, come up hither, and I*

will shew thee things which must be hereafter; which description of the angels talking with him and instructing him, is used in Dan. x. 7, and frequently (as already noted) in Zechariah, where it occurs both at the commencement of a vision, and also at that of its explanation; (see chap. iv. 1 and 5) and which occurring here in the former connexion, is again met with in the latter at chap. xvii. 1, and xxi. 9 and 15.

Verse 2. The Apostle was immediately in the Spirit; and the former vision having been witnessed upon earth, (for he turned round and beheld it, upon his attention being arrested by the voice of Christ, as the great voice of a trumpet heard behind him,) the scene is now changed, and he is, in effect at least, caught up into heaven, that he might thus obtain a view of what was about to be revealed;—perhaps not bodily, like Philip when he was removed by the Spirit from one place to another, but rather like St. Paul, when whether he was in the body or out of the body he knew not. There was however this difference between the two cases; that, whereas St. Paul, in order that he might be strengthened and prepared for those extraordinary trials he was personally to undergo for Christ's sake, heard words and received spiritual communications which it was not lawful, or rather possible, for him to impart to others; St. John was so favoured expressly that he might strengthen the church at large to bear all their trials by communicating what he there received, and might "testify of all things that he saw;" which he begins to do in the following words, *Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.* It will suffice to consider the heavens here spoken of, as being only the scene of the spiritual communications St. John received; where

the first vision he beheld was that of Christ seated upon a throne, surrounded immediately by spiritual beings, whose peculiar characters we shall presently consider, and more remotely, by an innumerable company of angels. The representation here given of the throne of God, which is referred to again from Rev. xi. 15—19 and xiv. 3, corresponds to that of Isa. vi. and Ezek. i. and x. of which the former is declared, John xii. 41, to have been a vision of the glory of Christ; which we cannot but consider as having been in like manner manifested between the Cherubim in the holy of holies of the tabernacle and the temple; and which is particularly shewn to be the subject of the vision before us by the rainbow which is seen round about the throne, this being afterwards seen around the head of Christ. (Chap. x. 1.) Nevertheless, as our Lord said of himself, even in his state of humiliation, that he who had seen him had seen the Father, this cannot be less true in reference to this vision of his glory; which we shall rightly understand therefore to be an entire revelation of the divine glory of the Trinity,—Father, Son, and Spirit,—as manifested in Christ, who, seated on his mediatorial throne, in his regal character, is there, as the Creator and Governor of the world, the manifestation of God the Father; whence this throne is called in another place equally "the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. xxii. 1.)

Verse 3. The splendor of Christ's glorified body is here represented by that of precious stones: "*He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone*;" or, (as it is in the original,) a stone *jasper and sardine*; intimating the appearance of the two combined; of which the former is a stone of great variety of colour, &c. Commentators have al-

ledged that there is one species met with "clear like the air;" but the fact appears doubtful, or of too rare occurrence to constitute the general character of the stone. The jasper, however, is mentioned Rev. xxi. 18, 19, as forming the first of the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem, and as the material also of which the wall itself was built; in consequence of which, when the city is described as seen by the Apostle "descending out of heaven" from God, having the glory of 'God," it is added, "her light was 'like unto a stone most precious, 'even like a jasper stone, clear as 'chrystal." (Rev. xxi. 10, 11.) From this description it is evident, that one of the most pure and splendid of the precious stones, commonly known to the ancients, must be here designated by the name of jasper, and not the opaque, or slightly translucent one, which is now commonly known by that name; unless indeed jasper, which is susceptible of brilliancy from a high polish, be chosen from its general use and appearance, and the quality of transparency be superadded to complete the symbolical description; in the same manner as, in farther describing the New Jerusalem, transparency is given to gold, and it is said "the building of 'the wall of it was of jasper; and 'the city was pure gold, like unto 'clear glass." (v. 18.) And again, "the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." (v. 21.) Whether however any other pellucid precious stone, or any uncommon variety of the modern jasper, or that most commonly known by this name with the superadded quality of transparency, (to which idea I rather incline, as being the most easy and natural explanation of the three,) be here contemplated, it is evident from chap. xxi. 10, 11,

above quoted, that it is designed to represent the divine glory here irradiating the mediatorial throne, as there the New Jerusalem, of which it is said "the glory of God doth 'lighten it, and the Lamb is the 'light thereof."

The *sardine* stone, which is the same as the *sardius* mentioned Exod. xxviii. 17, as the first of the twelve which were set in the breastplate of Aaron, is in the Hebrew called *Odem*, a name derived from the root *Adam*, "he was ruddy," and is considered to denote the *ruby*, (of which the Persian name is *Adam*,) or certainly some precious stone of the colour of human flesh, in the same way as (adopting a Roman derivation) we name from a like peculiarity the *carnelian* or *cornelian*, the general term for which, in reference also to its flesh colour, amongst the Greeks appears to have been *Sarda*.* This also is mentioned Rev. xxi. 20, as forming one of the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem, and both of them amongst other precious stones, In Ezek. xxviii. 13, and in the Lamentations of Jeremiah it is used to describe the pure flesh of the devoted Nazarite; for her "Nazarites were purer than snow; they 'were whiter than milk; they were 'more ruddy in body than rubies;" The combination of the two therefore, the jasper, "a stone most precious, clear as chrystal," causing an appearance as of "the glory of God;" and the sardine stone or ruby, an emblem of the pure flesh of the Nazarite; form together a description of Christ, corresponding to that given of the beloved of the church in Cant. v. 10. It represents also his glorified humanity as the second Adam, and the spotless Nazarite, set apart and separated to the service of God; and it accords

* Rees's Encyclopedia, Art. "Gems."

also with the vision of his glory as seen on the mount of transfiguration, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light and glistering.

The *rainbow*, the symbol of Christ as a covenant God, is here seen surrounding his mediatorial throne; for though the imaginations of man's heart are only evil continually, and must ever expose him to divine judgments; yet, and on this account, God, for Christ's sake, (whose atoning sacrifice, or the anticipation of it as offered by Noah, was to him as a sweet smelling savour,) entered into a covenant of peace and reconciliation, that he would no more destroy the world by a flood, or deal with man according to his own merits; and then established the rainbow as its token, ordaining that when he should bring a cloud over the earth his bow should appear in it, to remind man, and Himself as it were, of his unchangeable purpose in Christ. (Gen. ix. 12—26.) So when we might justly fear the anger of God, and the indications of coming judgments upon account of our numerous sins, we are taught in like manner to look at the bow of the covenant, at Jesus our mediator and covenant head, for whose sake, and through whose intercession, God hath for ever laid aside his anger against us, and the threatening cloud of judgment becomes resplendent only with manifestations of grace and mercy; and instead of deserved punishment we obtain the promise of glories and privileges which never could have belonged to us through any righteousness of our own; —

Such righteousness were creaturely at best,
We in his own obedience shall be drest.

Here also when God desires to give the Jewish nation the strongest assurance of his complete and ever-

lasting reconciliation with them, he refers to this transaction, and says "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." (Isaiah liv. 10.) And in the subsequent vision of Christ, Rev. x. 1, when he again reveals himself to the apostle, he appears, as being ever mindful of his covenant, with "a rainbow upon his head;" and again, in the description of the vision of the mediatorial throne seen by the prophet Ezekiel, it is said, "as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." (chap. i. 28.) Though the glory seen both by Ezekiel and by the apostle John as surrounding the throne had the form of the rainbow, yet we read that here the colour of it was green, or "*like unto an emerald*;" and from the softness of this colour, and its agreeableness to the human eye, upon which account God hath chosen it for that of the general mantle of the earth, it may be considered as an apt emblem of peace and reconciliation; whence a green branch is a fit token of offered peace. The olive leaf plucked off, brought into the ark by Noah's dove might imply, with a double significancy, that the deluge of divine wrath had passed away and subsided; and the palm branches, which the saints bear in their hands, may be considered as indicating, not only that they had obtained a victory, but that their warfare was for ever terminated.

But it may on the most substantial grounds be believed, that the

rainbow was given as a pledge and promise of more than these spiritual blessings; and that the covenant made with Noah, and, as it is expressly said, "with the earth," and its various inhabitants, looked forward to the renovation of all things under Christ, when the creature also, or the whole creation, shall at length be delivered from the bondage of corruption. For if we find in other cases, that the end, as seen by God from the beginning, is shadowed forth by the earliest types and prophecies, so that the tree of life in the midst of Paradise was but a type or promise of that tree of life which shall be possessed in the new Jerusalem; and Eve, the bride of the first Adam, was but a type of the bride, the Lamb's wife, (which mystery the apostle lays open in Ephes. v. 20;) and if it is usual also, on the first establishment of a type, or of a typical ceremony, that only the inferior and subordinate motives, intelligible by the persons to whom the command is given, and applicable to their present circumstances, should be adduced; leaving its ultimate and more important meaning to be opened farther to the church at subsequent periods as her necessities may require, (which was manifestly the case with respect to the institution of the passover, the feast of first fruits, the feast of tabernacles, the selection of the first-born, &c.) it is equally sound criticism to consider the covenant made with Noah and with all "the earth" as looking farther than the mere assurance that it should no more be destroyed by a flood, and as referring ultimately to the new heaven and the new earth, which, together with the vision of the bride, the Lamb's wife, and the tree of life, form the concluding subjects of the Apocalyptic revelations. This idea does not in

any way interfere with the promises of spiritual blessings which we have supposed to be implied in the use of this symbol, but confirms, embodies, and substantiates them. In this view, as the *greenness* of the rainbow directs our attention immediately towards the earth, which universally wears this colour, so it would be a token of its restored fertility towards man, and a type of its moral fertility towards God, when under the covenant of peace during the millennial period, as well as of the renovation of all things in the eternal state. In further confirmation of which general view of the import of the covenant with Noah, we may notice that the apocalyptic vision, where the rainbow is seen surrounding the throne of Christ, refers as its ultimate object to his future reign with his redeemed and glorified church upon earth; as is evidenced by the hymn of praise and thanksgiving, there represented as sung by them, and ending with these words,—“And we shall reign on the earth.” And in like manner the second vision, where Christ manifests himself as encircled by the rainbow of the covenant, (Rev. x. 1, and 2,) relates to the time when he comes to take possession of all the kingdoms of the world, setting his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth,—first indeed that he may purge it of his enemies by the severity of his judgments; but also that he may then restore it in mercy. Again we find evidence of a connexion between this covenant and the expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, in the fact that the promise to the Jewish nation of everlasting peace and reconciliation in the latter days, in which this more ancient covenant with Noah is referred to, is subsequently made to them in the terms of the promise of

"new heavens" and a "new earth." (Compare Isa. LIV. 9—14; LXV. 17—25; LXVI. 22.)

Again, the same connexion is shewn to exist between the covenant made with Noah and the new heavens and the new earth, by 2 Pet. III. 5—13, where the Apostle brings into one view the former destruction of the world by water, and its appointed future destruction by fire; and adds, "but we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—Which promise made by God of the restitution of all things through Christ he had before referred to in his address to the multitude on the day of Pentecost, as having been spoken of "by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began;" and which we cannot doubt therefore was revealed to Noah, who was so extraordinary a character both as a prophet of God and a preacher of righteousness, on the occasion of the first awful destruction of the world; and to the existence of which communication the rainbow may be considered as yet continuing to bear testimony. We also find that our Lord, who here at the opening vision of the Apocalyptic history is represented as surrounded by the rainbow of the covenant, at the conclusion of it, chap. xxi. 5, announces the work of redemption as thus completed:—"Behold, I make all things new;" and the Apostle beholds "a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." By adopting this view we complete the parallel between Noah and Abraham, who equally, amidst the apostacy of all the world around them, stood forth at the head of their families as the avowed servants of God, and as singular examples to all future generations of the power of faith; and

shew that each was made the depository of the counsels of God and of his designs of mercy in Christ towards this world.

Verse 4. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats (or rather thrones—for it is the same word in both places) and upon the seats (or thrones) I saw four and twenty Elders sitting clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold." As the government in the patriarchal times would naturally belong to the heads of families, so the Elders amongst the Hebrews were the magistrates, heads, or rulers of the people; and we read in Exod. xviii. 25, that Moses, following the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, to assist him in the administration of justice; of whom seventy accompanied Moses when he beheld the vision of the glory of Christ. (Chap. xxiv.) And when he was afterwards led to complain of the burden of the government of so numerous a people, he by divine command gathered together seventy men, who were "the elders of Israel" "and officers over them," and set them round about the tabernacle, and the Lord took of the spirit that was upon him (Moses) and gave it unto the seventy elders. (See Numb. xi. 24.) And these elders, composing the senate belonging to all the tribes in general, sat with the leader, judge, or king, who presided in this court; and it appears from 2 Chron. xix. 8—11, that if the cause was of a spiritual or ecclesiastical nature the high priest was the chief judge; otherwise, a chief justice who sat on behalf of the king. The council or assembly which is considered to have thus originated existed in the time of our Saviour, and is referred to Matt. v. 21, 22; Mark xiii. 9,

&c. and was then called the *Sanhedrim*, derived from *συν* together and *εδρα* a seat. The president of this assembly was called *Nasi* or prince, his deputy *Ab-beth-din*, Father of the house of judgment; and the sub-deputy was called *chacom* the wise; the rest were denominated *tzekanim*, elders or senators. The room in which they sat was a rotunda, half of which was built without the temple and half within; and as it was never allowed to sit down in the temple, they tell us this part was for those who stood up, the other half or semicircle extended without the holy place, and here the judges sat. The *Nasi* or prince sat on a throne at the end of the hall, having his deputy on his right hand, and his sub-deputy on his left; the other senators were ranged in order on each side. There were also two scribes, the one to write down the suffrages of those who were for condemnation, the other to take down the suffrages of those who were for absolution. The vision appears therefore to have reference to the prince, or his representative, sitting in the midst of this sacred congregation of rulers. The number of the elders seen in the vision is however not seventy, but twenty and four; and upon the sacred character of this number it is to be observed, that as that of 7 is formed by the most simple series of geometrical progression, viz. 1, 2, 4, limited to three terms; so this is formed by the first or most simple cube, viz. the number 8, taken also three times; the cube being the most perfect of all forms of figure or of number; on which account the heavenly or perfect state, as represented in the tabernacle, and in the temple, and also in the vision of Ezekiel by the holy of holies, and in this book by the New Jerusalem, is in each case described under the form of a cube;

the first being of the dimensions of ten cubits, the two next of twenty cubits, and the last of twelve thousand furlongs each way, or in "length," "breadth," and "height." The sacred number twenty-four, thus formed upon the essentially sacred character of the number 3, and the perfect form of the cube, has reference to the regal glory of Christ, here manifested to the Apostle, and hereafter to be universally manifested by him as seated upon his mediatorial throne; of which the glory of king Solomon's throne was one of the most eminent types: where also it was represented, in a way to which this vision corresponds; for we read in 1 Chron. xxvii. 1, (relative to the arrangements made and the institutions formed by David, under divine direction, for this typical purpose, preparatory to the future reign of his son,) that "of the children of Israel, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers who served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were *twenty and four thousand*." These twenty and four thousand armed men and their rulers, (again mentioned in 1 Chron. xxviii. 1; xxix. 6,) were thus in constant attendance about the throne; and being relieved every month, the whole formed the military power of the kingdom. In conformity then to this ancient type, the vision seen by St. John of the mediatorial throne surrounded by the four and twenty elders clothed in white raiment, (which, typifying the righteousness of Christ, is equally the regal and priestly vesture,) represents Christ and his church manifested in power, or in their regal character; as is further, and still more clearly, expressed by the thrones upon which they sit,

and by the crowns of gold which they wear. And we must observe, that similar typical representations of the church in the exercise of the attribute of power, accompanying the ark or throne of Christ, are amongst the most constant which occur in the Old Testament. Thus whenever the ark moved from its place in its passage through the wilderness, we find it was preceded by the armed and marshalled tribes of Israel, and moved forward in power; Moses pronouncing these words, "Rise up Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." And so when the typical arrangements were prescribed for the destruction of the city of Jericho, (the figure of the destruction of the kingdoms of this world,) the ark was in like manner preceded by the armed bands of Israel; Christ manifesting himself in power, with a drawn sword in his hand, "as Captain of the host of the Lord." And again, before David would decide to bring up the ark from Kirjathjearim we read, that he "consulted with the captains of thousands, and hundreds, and with every leader;" and again, that "David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-edom" to Jerusalem; and further, that when Solomon had completed the building of the temple he assembled "the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Zion." (See 1 Chron. xiii. 1; xv. 25; 2 Chron. v. 2.)

After this description of the throne of Christ, surrounded, like the mercy seat of the ark, by the elders, heads of tribes, and captains of thousands, representing all the glorified spirits

of the true Israel partaking in the power of Christ and waiting the reunion to their bodies, which though sown in weakness shall hereafter themselves also be raised in power, the prophecy thus continues.—

Verse 5. "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices." These are the tokens of the active exercise of that power of Christ and his church, the passive possession of which is shewn by the symbols already considered; and they correspond to the appearances described at the promulgation of the law by Christ, the supreme judge and law giver, from mount Sinai; given, as the Apostle informs us, by the ministration of angels, and into whose offices the church of the departed saints, since the resurrection of Christ, have been admitted. For we read that this act also was attended by the awful sanctions of "thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud." (Exod. xix. 16.)

The *lightnings* in this vision, as in that of Ezekiel, where it is said that the Cherubim or "living creatures ran and returned as a flash of lightning," represent the swift agency of these spiritual beings in ministering around the throne of Christ, and especially in inflicting destruction upon his and the church's enemies. According to the promise of participation in these acts made to the saints of Thyatira, and to that prophecy of Enoch.—Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment,—and to the description of the future fulfilment of these prophecies and promises as contained in Rev. xix.

The *thunder* is spoken of in the book of Job as a demonstration of the power of God, when he says "the thunder of his power who can understand;" and again in chap.

xxvii. 2—5, it is spoken of at large, as being his voice. So likewise we find that the voice which came to Christ from heaven, (John xii. 28, 29,) was compared by some who heard it to *thunder*; while by others it was supposed to be the *voice* of an angel speaking to him. In Rev. xiv. 2, the voice of the church on earth is compared to “the voice of a great thunder;” but in the description before us this symbol indicates the voices of the Cherubim, or church in heaven, whose speech is compared (Rev. vi. 1) to “the noise of thunder,” and who in Ezekiel i. 24, 25, are described in these corresponding and awful terms:—“And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host; when they stood they let down their wings, and there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads.”

The “*voices*” here heard from the throne, though mentioned as in addition to the thunders, are equivalent to them, and are like them the voices of the Cherubim or church in heaven. As voices directing the judgments to be poured out on the adversaries of the church on earth they occur Rev. xv. 7; xvi. 1, where one of the Cherubim, having given the seven vials of wrath into the hands of seven angels, the prophet hears “a great *voice*” from the temple in heaven, or holy of holies, where the Cherubim are, accompanying this act and saying, “Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” And more particularly upon the infliction of the seventh and most important of these last plagues, or judgments, a *voice* is again heard out of the temple, from the throne, where the Cherubim are, saying, “It is done.” And though these

words are, on another occasion, represented as uttered by Christ himself, this fact is only confirmatory of the interesting doctrine, established by numerous similar evidences in this book, of the entire union existing between Christ the common head, the church in heaven, and the church on earth.

Again, we meet with these *voices* of the Cherubim as the voices of triumphant joy, ushering in the several periods of Christ's kingdom. Thus its first period, commencing from the sounding of the seventh trumpet, is thus announced Rev. xi. 15, —“And there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.” And this is responded to by the church on earth, Rev. xiv. 2, in “a voice as of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”

Again the same *voices*, or choruses of the church in heaven, as of *thunder*, accompanied in this instance by the lightnings, or indications of the severity of the divine law, always usher in, when described in each of the separate narratives of the Apocalypse, the second period of the kingdom of Christ; viz. that in which is poured out the seventh and last vial of the wrath of the Lamb; this period containing the great event of the battle of Armageddon, when Christ will destroy by the law, which is like unto fire, or by the sword which proceedeth out of his mouth, all those who have disobeyed his commandments and rejected his gospel. Thus at Rev. xvi. 18, where this judgment first occurs as belonging to the supplementary history of the western branch of the Roman empire, it is said to be accompanied by “*voices*, and thunders, and light-

nings." At chap. viii. 5, where it is set forth as the final one which is to come upon its eastern branch, there is the same description given of it as at Rev. xi. 19, where it is introduced as being also the final one upon the apostate church. The last chorus of voices mentioned in this book ushers in the third period of the kingdom of Christ, and of his saints; or the thousand years of his peaceful reign, and is thus described, Rev. xix. 1—6: "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments.—And the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia; and a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants; and ye that fear him, both small and great; and I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." It appears evident then, from a consideration of these passages, and especially from the words therein used, "*our God*," that the voices or thunders proceeding at different times from the throne, and described in this opening vision of the sealed book and in other passages as accompanying the lightnings are the voices of the Cherubim or church in heaven, the delegates of Christ, whom he associates with himself, in the administration of his mediatorial kingdom; and that the only voice from the throne which is peculiarly that of Christ himself, is that referring to the new creation, (Rev. xxi. 5,) which is described differently from the rest, not simply as proceeding

"from the throne," but from him "that sat upon the throne."

"*And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.*" The symbols of lamps of fire, may be considered as answering to those tongues of fire under which appearance the Holy Spirit manifested himself on the day of Pentecost, when Christ endued his church with miraculous gifts. They are said to be "burning before the throne;" and every object which in this revelation is described as standing "before the throne," or "before God," that is, in his immediate presence, will be found to be thus designated in reference to its connexion with the elect church; which is thus represented as being never removed from his thoughts and providential care, as it is said in Zech. ii. 8, concerning the care of the Lord for Zion,—"*He that toucheth thee, toucheth the apple of his eye;*" and again in Isaiah xlix. 15, 16, "*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee,*" (i. e. rather than I will forget thee.) "*Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.*" The Holy Spirit, represented by these seven lamps burning, as it is said, "before the throne," is then by that particular expression designated as being here represented, not abstractedly, but in reference to his covenant office of illuminating the universal church; as the seven eyes are said (chap. v. 6,) to be "sent forth into all the earth." In like manner as Christ is also in this vision to be considered as manifested in his covenant office, as a Lamb that had been slain; and God the Father is also represented on the mediatorial throne as manifested in Christ, encircled

by the rainbow of the covenant.

Verse 6. "And before the throne 'there was a sea of glass like unto 'chrystal.'" An allusion is probably here made to the laver, or brazen sea of the tabernacle and temple, in which the priests washed before they officiated,—an emblem of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and of the blood of Christ. A *sea of glass*, or glassy sea, is used however in a subsequent vision as an apt emblem of political tranquillity : nor is there any reason why we should here separate the idea of peace and tranquillity, from that of purity ; for we are told of the wisdom which is from above, that "it is first pure and then peaceable," and that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, and peace." Under the symbol of a tranquil and glassy sea, clear as chrystal, seen before the throne, which no breath of violence or discord ever disturbs, we have then a representation, not only of the *purity* but of the *peace* prevailing throughout those heavenly regions, where the divine being manifests himself as the spirit of love, as well as the source of all power. To obtain a just idea of the peace and blessedness of the heavenly state, as compared with the condition of the world, we must contrast this picture with that given by Daniel of the four winds striving with all opposition and violence upon the great sea ; out of which troubled source have arisen the four great powers which have successively held the dominion of this world.

"And in the midst of the throne, 'and round about the throne were 'four living creatures, full of eyes 'before and behind.'" Every member of the church, whether in heaven or earth, like Christ its head, holds in his own person the priestly as well as the regal character ; the possession and the exercise of which

offices cannot however in any manner be so fully and distinctly set forth as by the use of a separate and distinct symbol for each of them. Thus Christ is spoken of in this vision in his regal character under the title of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah ;" and is represented also in the same character, as sitting upon a throne ; but in his priestly office he is represented "as a Lamb that had been slain," standing by the side of the throne, having seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God. We have already considered the church of the departed saints in the former of these two characters of which they are made to partake with Christ, and under which they are represented like him as sitting upon thrones ; we are now called upon to contemplate them as partaking of his priestly character, acting under the strong power and influence of the Spirit of God, and here represented, like the Lamb in whose seven horns were seven eyes, under the symbol of four animals or living creatures, full of eyes ; which are in our translation of Ezekiel xv. 19, &c. correctly denominated "*Living Creatures*," though the corresponding term is here unsuitably rendered "*Beasts*."

The Holy Spirit is we find spoken of in Scripture under those symbols which are most pure and impalpable, as by a rushing mighty *wind*, which, though invisible, is so powerful in its effects. By *fire* also, from its being unsubstantial, and from its powerful, purifying, enlightning and vivifying influences. *Water* also, from its purity, and purifying properties, is another emblem ; as is also, *oil*, in reference to the pure flame which it produces, and, in the case of the holy anointing oil, the grateful perfume it yielded. But the only solid substance used to represent the Spirit of God, is the eye

of man; a substance which should hardly be called a substance, but rather embodied life; and so appropriate an emblem of spirit, or of the Holy Spirit, has the eye of man appeared, that it is used in ordinary symbolical language as the type of wisdom, intelligence, and divine prescience. That the eye is here used absolutely to signify the Holy Spirit is shewn by the fact, that the *Living Creatures* are said to be full of eyes, not only before and behind but within also; which we cannot explain by referring to the use of the eye, but must interpret by simply substituting the word Holy Spirit for that symbol, and say, that the church in heaven are here represented as filled and thoroughly imbued with the Holy Spirit. Which thing is equally declared in the vision of Ezekiel, when it is said of the Cherubim that "their whole body, 'and their backs, and their hands, 'and their wings, and the wheels, 'were full of eyes round about."

On referring to other representations of the Cherubim we shall find, that in the tabernacle and in the temple they were above the ark and mediatorial throne on which Christ manifested himself; while in the vision described in Ezek. i. 26; ix. 18, they are represented as beneath the throne: and in the vision under consideration they are seen by St. John as in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, or rather, (as it should be rendered,) in the circle of the throne; these several variations in the description tending to shew, that the only permanent idea designed to be enforced is that of the throne of Christ and his saints being one and the same. A similar remark may be made upon the circumstance, that in the tabernacle and in the temple the Cherubim were only *two*, which were beaten out of the same piece of gold,

and looked towards each other; but in the vision of Ezek. i. 10 they were four, each having the four faces of a Man, a Lion, an Ox, and an Eagle; while again in this vision, though they are four in number, each has the appearance of one only of these four animals.—These differences apparently intimate that the only permanent idea meant to be conveyed is, that the whole constitute one symbolical elect body, by whatever number of individual forms it may be represented. A third variation to be noticed is, that in the vision of Ezekiel the four Cherubim are accompanied by four wheels, which are represented as partaking of the same spirit with the Cherubim themselves; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels; and of which it is also said that "as for their 'rings they were so high that they 'were dreadful." (Ezek. i. 8.) And they appear to occupy the same place in this vision as the elders do in that of St. John, the one combined symbol of the Cherubim full of eyes, accompanied by or guiding these dreadful and awful wheels full of eyes, thus appearing to represent, equally with the two separate and distinct symbols of the Apocalyptic vision, the church in heaven exercising both the regal and priestly office in subordination to Christ, who as the creator and governor of the world directs and overrules the events of all ages; or as the poet expresses it,

"Whose hands *the wheels* of nature guide,
With an unerring skill;
And thousand worlds extended wide,
Obey his sovereign will."

Neither are these various descriptions of the exercise of the attribute of power by the church altogether without a difference of meaning; for in the wheels we may see the exercise of Christ's power over inanimate and over animate but irrational nature, governing and sustaining all things in their due course

by his general providence. In the elders seated upon the thrones we see an emblem of the regal power of Christ exercised in the government of his own willing people. And in the armed tribes of Israel, as well as the lightnings which proceed from the mediatorial throne, we see a symbol of his power as exercised towards his adversaries; the whole combined description intimating the participation enjoyed by the church in the right of power possessed by Christ as Creator, King, and Conqueror.*

Verse 7. Of these Cherubim it is said that "*the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature was like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.*" The holy and elect Jewish nation is the most constant and important type of the spiritual church of Christ. They are here represented as they appeared encamped in four companies around the tabernacle and mercy seat, or around the throne of Christ, during their sojourning in the wilderness, according to the directions thus given by God to Moses and recorded in Numbers 11. "And on the east side shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch; which standard, according to the Jewish tradition, bore the figure of a lion. So Christ, descended from Judah, is spoken of in this vision, as "the Lion of the tribe of

Judah;" and Jacob in his last blessing exalted this tribe, saying, in allusion to his name, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise,"—"thy father's children shall bow down before thee,"—"Judah is a *lion's whelp*: from the prey my son thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a *lion*, and as an old *lion*, who shall rouse him up." With him were also encamped under the same standard the tribes of Issachar, and Zebulun. On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, which according to the same tradition was the figure of a man, due to Reuben as being the first born man child of Jacob's family, "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power;" of whom, notwithstanding his being subordinated both to Judah and to Joseph, (who received the double portion of the first born, 1 Chron. v. 1,) Moses yet said, in allusion it might appear to his standard bearing the figure of a man, "Let Reuben live, and not die, and let not his men be few." (Deut. chap. xxxiii. 6.) And with him were associated, under the same standard the tribes of Simeon and Gad,—on the west side was the standard of the tribe of Ephraim, the figure of which was a calf, or young bull; and upon the name of his beloved Joseph his father dwelt with peculiar delight, as one who had under the severest trials been strengthened by the hands of the

* It may possibly occur to some as an objection to the supposed correspondency between the symbol of the wheels of Ezekiel's vision, and the elders of St. John's, that the former are represented as being full of eyes, which the latter are not; upon which I would therefore observe, that when a complete hieroglyphic is used,—as when a Wheel, a Lion, an Eagle, or a Lamb are made to represent a man or men,—there is no impropriety in the abundance of the spiritual illumination they enjoy being described by the addition of many eyes; but that when the symbol is itself the human form, as in the case of the elders, or of him that sat on the throne, such an addition would appear to be incongruous and inappropriate. And I may further observe, that the crowns which the elders themselves wear imply, that as kings they had already been anointed with the holy anointing oil, and that these are therefore, without any increase in the number of their eyes, sufficient emblems of their being under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

mighty God of Jacob, and of the Almighty whose abundant blessings he pronounced should descend upon his head. This was more particularly fulfilled in Ephraim, whom the patriarch adopted as his own son, and whose seed he predicted should become "a multitude of nations;" and so distinguished was Ephraim amongst the tribes, that his name was given to one of the two divisions of the whole nation, as the name of Judah was to the other; as in Isaiah xi. 13. In the blessing of Moses we find that Ephraim is distinguished by the symbol which tradition ascribes to him, for he says of the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, in like allusion perhaps to the standard under which they appeared before him, "Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock; and his horns are like the horns of unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth, and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh."—Under the same standard was associated also the tribe of Benjamin. And on the north side of the tabernacle was the standard of the camp of the tribe of Dan, said to have borne the figure of an eagle; of whom Jacob pronounced, in reference to the import of his name, that he should judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel, or a distinguished one amongst them. To him also is ascribed, in the blessing of Moses, the regal lion; but this being here appropriated to Judah, that of the sovereign of the birds, in the act, as is particularly noted, of "flying," or rather of spreading out his wings, an emblem of rule and wide extended empire, appears to be substituted. —Under the same standard were

associated the remaining tribes of Asher, and Naphtali. So that according to the natural and not unusual method of speaking of a body of men under the name of the standard which they follow, when we see in the vision of St. John the Lion, the Man, the Bull, and the Eagle, surrounding the throne of Christ, we see a representation of the ancient church, as when encamped in the wilderness, also surrounding his throne; and as we may say respecting the Jewish nation, so also we must say of this parallel representation, that it is a type of the elect church of the first-born; and, in this vision, of that portion of them whose names were not only "written in heaven," but who had already taken possession of their inheritance. Now if we consider the vision before us by the light of these facts we shall find the interpretation here given, and the tradition of the Jews relative to the figures carried on the four standards of Israel, completely borne out: for if we contemplate the whole animal creation as consisting of the four classes of the rational, the wild beasts, the tame cattle, and the birds; we shall find that the elect or chief of all are here chosen,—namely, *man* the only rational animal and the head of all creation, the *lion* called the king of wild beasts, the *bull* the head of the flocks and herds and of all tame cattle, and the *eagle* esteemed the king of birds,—beautifully and accurately representing the church of the elect, or first-born, chosen by Christ, and redeemed by his blood out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people. And Rabbi Abin authorises this view of the symbol when he observes, "There are four which have principality in this world; among intellectual creatures *MAN*, among birds the *EAGLE*, among cattle the *ox*, and among wild beasts

the LION. Thus we may consider that we at length understand by the means of this vision what was formerly less clearly expressed under the legal dispensation by the symbol of the Cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; respecting which it appears that St. Paul, when writing to the Hebrews (chap. ix. 5,) had much that he wished to say; though he could not at that time speak of them more particularly. This omission, otherwise so greatly to be deplored, is however here supplied; and the meaning is revealed of an ancient type so interesting to the church of Christ, as having been for so long a period the only promise of their being hereafter, when their earthly pilgrimage and warfare should be accomplished, made partakers of the future glory of their Lord.

Verse 8. It is said of these four living creatures or Cherubim, that they had each of them *six wings*; which agrees with the description given of them in Isa. vi. 2. Also in Ezek. i. 6 and x. 21, they are represented as having four wings, by which reference to the rapidity of the motion of birds, far surpassing that of any other animals, is described that extreme velocity with which we are led to believe that spiritual bodies traverse through space, which in Ezekiel i. 14 is compared to that of a flash of lightning; in conformity to which use of the symbol of wings, the angel who communicated the prophecy of the seventy weeks to Daniel, and touched him about the time of the evening oblation, is said to have been caused to "*fly swiftly.*" By these symbols also we receive an intimation that the church in heaven is engaged in active services; which might indeed be inferred to be the case from the promises made in the epistles to the churches, and especially in that to Thyatira, and which our present ex-

perience also would naturally lead us to consider as necessarily constituting a principal source of the happiness of a future state.

It is added that the Cherubim, as spiritual beings incapable of fatigue, "*rest (or cease not) day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;*" and it is said also by Isaiah (chap. vi. 3,) "that the Seraphim cried one unto another saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." As vessels of the Holy Spirit they thus ascribe holiness to God, the three-fold ascription having reference to the divine Trinity,—to God the Father, who in times past created the world; to God the Son, who now worketh out its redemption; and to God the Holy Ghost, who we learn from these divine oracles, is to be the life of the future world. The sacred character of the number 3 (derived we cannot doubt from the divine Trinity itself,) has been already mentioned, as forming the basis of that of the numbers 7 and 24. We have found it likewise in the primary division of the Apocalypse into *three parts*, referring like this doxology to the past, the present, and the future; and we may perceive in the general construction of the whole of this sacred volume a still farther reference to the revelation made in this particular vision of the Divine Being. For as the divine personality is here represented as three-fold, and the holiness of the third person of the Trinity is also indicated by a seven-fold representation; so the primary division of this book is three-fold, and the third portion of its times (namely, the things which must be hereafter,) is represented by a seven-fold subdivision into the times of the seven seals. The perfection of the works of creation, as they came forth from his

hands who pronounced them "*good*," appears also clearly to have been expressed in a similar way; for, in reference to the senses of sight and hearing, we find a natural division of the elements of light into seven gradations of colour; and of sound into a like number of gradations or musical notes; whose number we cannot in either case increase or diminish. The number three is in each case also pointed out as the basis of this seven-fold scale; viz. in music, by the peculiar harmonious agreement of thirds; and in light, by the seven prismatic colours resolving themselves into the three principal ones of blue, yellow, and red. Which connexion between the numbers 3 and 7 has been found by the means of the minute interpretation of the seven apocalyptic seals, or trumpets, which similarly resolve themselves, in reference to their several distinct subjects, into the three sets of 1, 2 and 4, to be founded on geometrical progression, or repeated multiplication by the same number; as the perfect cube is founded on the multiplication of the same number twice into itself. These facts however are evidences of divine wisdom and design floating upon or near the surface of an unfathomable sea. As we may however believe that the dimensions of the sacred buildings and vessels of the tabernacle and of the temple, directed to be so strictly attended to in all things, were in some way significant; and the discoveries of modern chemistry, by which it is found that the multiples alone of simple and elementary bodies will combine so as to form new and different compound bodies, shew that all things both in the books of nature and of revelation are specifically appointed, and regulated by number; it may not perhaps be unreasonable to anticipate a discovery

hereafter of a still farther correspondence between them, answerable to these first beginnings.

Verses 9 to 11. "*And when these living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*" In the previous verses we have seen the church in heaven, for the purpose of more clearly explaining their distinct offices of kings and priests, represented under the diverse symbols of the elders and the Cherubim: the principal object of the passage now under consideration is to shew that these symbols nevertheless represent only the same individuals as seen under different aspects. This is effected by shewing that they never act separately or independently of each other, but always together as one and the same body; so that when the Cherubim offer their doxology, the elders simultaneously offer theirs. This union of the two symbols is demonstrated with respect to the living creatures or Cherubim and the wheels full of eyes, seen in Ezekiel's vision, (answering to these Cherubim and elders in the vision of St. John,) by its being stated that "when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." (Ezek. i. 19, 21; x. 16, 17.)

Observe farther the entire humiliation of the church in heaven. They have thoroughly learned, through the

indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that most difficult of all lessons, which it is the object of all the divine dispensations to teach, that God is everything and man nothing; the pride of the old Adam has been thoroughly purged out of them by the sharp medicine of death; and you now see them in the beauty of holiness, and in the perfection of humility. The Apostle by one short visit to these heavenly regions was enabled to say with the deepest conviction, "Not I, but the grace of God that was in me;"—"not of works, but of grace, lest any man should boast." And here, in the celestial song, there is but one prevailing sentiment, "Thou art worthy." There are no difficulties found here in the doctrine of election by grace, brought hence by St. Paul, so "hard to be understood" upon earth: all these are now banished and lost in sight,—“the light of heaven hath chased them.”

This humiliation of the Cherubim or church in heaven is in like manner expressed in the vision of Isaiah by their covering their faces and their feet with their wings; shewing that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him." The action indicates also such a glory to be present in God, as they are unworthy to look upon; and in themselves such an inferiority, as is not worthy to be looked upon. So Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God; and Elijah wrapt his in his mantle when he heard the still small voice which denoted the presence of the Lord. (Exod. iii. 6; and 1 Kings xix. 13.)

We farther notice in the description of the simultaneous action im-

puted to the Cherubim and the elders, (as being one and the same body of individuals seen under different aspects,) the propriety of those respectively assigned to each as referring, the one to the priestly, and the other to the regal office of the heavenly church. Thus while the living creatures ascribe "glory, and honour, and thanks" to Christ for the blessings of redemption, the elders ascribe "glory and honour and power" to Him by whom and for whom all things were made; which is their acknowledgement to their great King that it is from him they receive, and for his pleasure they employ, their delegated honours; and the eastern custom of first falling down on the knees, and then bowing the head to the earth, is considered to be here described. This act of homage may also receive illustration from the coronation of a Christian prince, whose nobles surround the throne, remaining uncovered with their coronets in their hands until the king is crowned, when they place them upon their heads, to signify that it is from him as their earthly sovereign all their possessions and honours are derived. The contrast also here made between the "*thanks*" rendered by the Cherubim, and the "*power*" ascribed by the elders to Christ, is too remarkable to be passed over without notice, and too obvious in its explanation to leave any doubt as to its import; and we thus find every passage and every word in this vision wonderfully arranged and chosen, so as to agree in setting forth, under the striking symbols we have thus endeavoured to explain, the several offices and the glory of Christ and of his redeemed church.

JAS. H. FREER.

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

ACTS III. 19—21; ROM. VIII. 19—21.

My dear Sir,

In consequence of the encouragement you have given me to prepare, "if the Lord will," a series of papers on the *New Testament* evidence to "the restitution of all things" at the next coming of the Lord, I avail myself of your kindness, and send you the first of them for insertion in the Investigator. As in the former papers on the Old Testament *two* objects were necessarily kept in view, I mean the testimonies of the prophets to *both* advents, in the following our attention and inquiry will be directed and confined to *the second advent only*. I propose considering the four Gospels in their canonical order, which will be, perhaps, the simplest plan; and I pray that the anointing of the Holy One may abide in me, and teach me all things needful for this work.^a My dear Sir, may a great blessing rest upon your labours! Believe me yours most truly,

W. W. P.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew, as it stands the first in the canon of the New Testament, so we have reason for believing that it was written about eight years after our Lord's ascension, and the first of the four gospels.^b The book opens with the genealogy of "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Two things are here observable: first, that by his reputed father, i. e. by the lawful husband of his mother, he claimed a lineal descent from David in the line of Solomon, and thus was *legally* David's son, as he was naturally David's Lord. But,

secondly, there seems to have been a special purpose in this genealogy being granted to the church, which refers, I conceive, to *the Restitution of all things*. It formed a part of the scriptural expectation of the seed of Abraham, that Christ, as David's son, should sit on David's throne.^c "This genealogy proves, that the kingdom of Israel was Christ's by right of inheritance. Christ, though he was not the real son of Joseph, yet was the legal son with greater reason than when a man took a wife, and died, and left no seed, his brother's seed by her were to be looked upon as his, and had the right of inheritance."^d This genealogy then is a standing evidence to the truth, that to our Jesus this privilege belongs, and that in him *alone* this scriptural expectation of the Hebrews shall be fulfilled; and *then* only, when He, "the Lord of hosts, shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."^e Of the name *Jesus*, (vv. 16, 21,) it may be remarked, that it was the same as *Joshua* or *Jehoshua*, both intimating the work of *the Lord, the Saviour*, in bringing in the people to their promised rest: in the one case, the typical rest of Canaan;^f in the other, the rest which remaineth to the people of God. Of that name *Emmanuel* it must not be forgotten, that its full development can only take place when "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."^g

In the second chapter we meet

^a 1 John II. 27.^b See Scott's Preface,—H. Horne, vol. II. 11, 12; Jer. XXIII. 5, &c.^c Jon. Edwards' Works, II. 776.^d Psal. CXXXII.^e Isa. XXIV. 23.^f Heb. IV. 8, 9.^g Rev. XXI. 3; Ezek. XXXVII. 27.

with the inquiry of the "wise men from the east," and the reply, which "all the chief priests and scribes of the people" make to Herod, when "he demanded of them where Christ should be born." With one voice they describe him as *King of the Jews*; in other words, as "the Governor, that shall rule God's people Israel." I need not remind the Christian reader, that Christ never had the opportunity of ruling over the *ten tribes* of Israel; neither need I add, that, when Pilate told the Jews he was their King, they indignantly rejected him: "Write not the king of the Jews, but that *he said*, I am the king of the Jews." But the Christian knows that his "people shall be willing in the day of his power," when the Lord "will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."^h Now should any attempt to explain this by saying that, when all power was committed to him in heaven and in earth, he then became their king, my reply is, that in this sense he is no more king of the *Jews* than king of the *Gentiles*; but the terms of the passage require a *peculiar appropriation of him in a kingly character to rule God's people Israel*, which such an explanation does not embrace.

The narrative of John the Baptist's ministry associates with it that coming of Elias to restore all things, which our Lord confirmed;ⁱ and of which the coming of this forerunner, crying in the wilderness, in the spi-

rit and power of Elias, was a type. The twelfth verse of the chapter refers to the final separation of the elect from the ungodly world, under the figure of dividing the wheat from the chaff; and of the time when this separation shall take place let the Christian church be judge. If she judge according to the Scriptures, she must confess that it will be "in the *regeneration*, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory:^k she must own, that it will be "in the end of this age (*ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*) when the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."^l

Passing by our Lord's baptism in the river Jordan, we come to the wilderness temptation, in which there is one fact recorded of so striking a kind, that it must not be passed by in silence. When two of Satan's temptations had failed, to which he had had recourse, he tried a third; and the bait, by which he hoped to allure the Redeemer into sin, is very remarkable.—That Satan is "the god of this world," by usurpation on his part, and by permission on the Lord's, is clear; for he is styled by Jesus Christ himself, "the prince of this world;"^m and, by an apostle of the Lord, "the god of this world;"ⁿ though of course we do not forget, that the divine administration is above this, restraining and directing it, as best and most effectually to promote "whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel determined before to be done."^o It is however remarkable, that Satan should bait his hook with that very thing which of right belongs to Christ as "the second Adam," and upon which he will visibly enter, when, as "the Lord from heaven,"

^h Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 22.

28. ⁱ Matt. xiii. 40—42.

ⁱ Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xvii. 10—12.

^m John xii. 31.

^k Matt. xix.

ⁿ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

^o Acts iv. 28.

he shall next be revealed with many diadems, and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and Satan shall be cast out of his inheritance.^p The rejection of this offer on the part of Jesus was followed by the retreat of the enemy, "and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

There was a mystery in the Saviour's connexion with *Nazareth*; for this connexion bound him, as it were, to the *ten tribes*. In *Nazareth* he was miraculously conceived, in *Bethlehem* he was born, and in *Nazareth* he was brought up. Sampson and John Baptist were both *Nazarites*, and, as such, types of our Jesus. To accomplish this type he was "Jesus of *Nazareth*." And when he shall appear to reunite under himself the two kingdoms, which from the days of *Rehoboam* the son of *Solomon* have been twain, then the ten tribes will find that they, as well as the house of *David*, have a *local* interest in the eventful story of their Messiah as "God manifest in the flesh:" that, as the house of *David* have the priority of claim, because he was, as touching his manhood, "of the house and lineage of *David*," and was born in the city of *Bethlehem* where *David* was; yet in *Nazareth*, one of their cities, the seed of the woman was taken into personal union with the Godhead of the eternal Word; in that city he passed the days of his youth; from that he fulfilled the type of the *Nazarite*, according to the Scriptures of the prophets; and from that the very title was derived, which was designed to affix opprobrium upon him on the cross, but which was coupled with the attestation to his kingly character: in which character, when he shall be

revealed at the latter day, *Ephraim* and *Judah* shall rejoice together in Him as the king of *Israel*, as truly as the king of the Jews. It is a remarkable circumstance that *Jeremiah* prophesies of his miraculous conception in one of the cities of *Israel*, just as his birth is predicted in *Bethlehem*. Let the Reader study attentively *Jer. xxxi. 20—22*, and he will see the truth of this remark.

When *John Baptist* commenced his ministry in the wilderness of *Judea*, he said, "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."^q When "Jesus began to preach," he said, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."^r And shortly after we read, that he "went about all *Galilee*, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom."^s —What is this kingdom of heaven? From these passages it is clearly some kingdom connected with the preaching of the gospel; and the existing state of things in the earth, from the time of which *St. Matthew* speaks to this hour, will help to shew what we are to understand by "the kingdom of heaven." Satan has been, and still is, the permitted "god of this world," who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience. This necessarily implies that he has a kingdom. But his kingdom cannot subsist with Christ's; for the two principalities are as naturally and necessarily opposed as light and darkness: as the one advances the other must retreat. The prophet *Daniel* tells us of a kingdom, which the God of heaven shall set up, which shall never be destroyed; but which shall break in pieces and consume all those earthly kingdoms which had been represented in *Nebuchadnezzar's* vision. The extent

^p *Rev. xi. 15*; *Heb. ii. 8, 9*; *Rev. xx. 1, 2*.
^r *Chap. iii. 1, 2*.
^s *Chap. iv. 17*.
^t *v. 23*.

^q *Chap. iii. 1, 2*.

^r *Chap.*

of this kingdom was revealed to the same beloved servant of God; that it should be under the *whole* heaven, and therefore over the *whole earth*. To the same fact David testifies in Psalms II. 6, 8; LXXII. 8; and LXXXIX. 27. The fair inference, therefore, from the existing state of things, is—that the kingdom of heaven will only *fully* come, when Satan's kingdom shall be destroyed; that the preaching of the gospel is the preparatory means for bringing it in, for which cause it is called "the gospel of the kingdom;" and as long as the circumstances of the world require this gospel to be preached, so long we may be assured *the kingdom of heaven*, or of God, *is not fully come*. This kingdom, *in its state of infancy*, may be said to have commenced in the days of Christ, his transfiguration being an eminent manifestation of it: when the law and the prophets, in the persons of Moses and Elias, combined to testify to his future glory; and when God the Father, by a voice from heaven, confirmed this testimony. In every act of power and dominion over the creature, which was put forth by Jesus Christ whilst he travailed in sorrow amongst men, we find an earnest of his future dominion; and when he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead," a confirmation of these expectations concerning him was given. The kingdom of heaven therefore was at hand, when the Baptist preached, and when our Lord confirmed his testimony, *because the new dispensation of the gospel, then about to be introduced, was the infant state of that kingdom*.

Two apparent contradictions may here be adduced, which not only

justify my view of this subject, but which must appear to be contradictions still, unless this, or a similar view, be adopted. When our Lord preached repentance, as we have just seen, he gave this as the reason to quicken men to the work, that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. When he was going up to Jerusalem for the last passover, he spake a parable, *because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear*.^u The parable was that of the nobleman and his ten servants; the object of which was to teach them, that, though the nobleman's kingdom should at some time certainly appear, it should not appear then; in other words, that *it was not at hand*. Before this event occurred, this nobleman had to go into a far country, during which absence his servants were to occupy the different places assigned them, with a view to the final recompense of reward, until he came. But, inasmuch as the preaching of the gospel is the preliminary step to prepare for the nobleman's return, Christ said that the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*.

As we proceed with this history we meet next with the sermon on the mount, opening with nine beatitudes which our Lord pronounced upon as many different conditions of heart or state. In three cases the kingdom of heaven, or a reward in heaven, is promised as the recompense which shall be given; and must therefore be viewed in one or both of the two aspects of that kingdom which have just been set forth. The promise of the 5th verse is of so peculiar a character, that I must call the reader's attention to it more particularly.—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Men may employ all their

^u Luke XIX. 11—27.

ingenuity to get away from the plain meaning of these words, but it must be in vain. The passage naturally reminds us of the corresponding promise and blessing in Psalm xxxvii. 11—"But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." In these two passages every word has weight, and the very form of expression appears to have been selected to cut off all retreat from the conclusions of truth. The leading characteristic of the persons here described is that which distinguished our Lord Jesus Christ, whilst ministering among men;—"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, &c."w The tense of the verb is future, and the word "*inherit*," proves that the blessing promised is a blessing *not* in possession. The inheritance moreover is "*the earth*." In viewing the writings of the prophets, with reference to this subject, we found in Zeph. iii. 12—"I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."x It was then observed that the difficulties of this passage were removed by Dr. Homes' translation: "I will cause to remain in thee a people that is *humble and meek*, or poor in spirit, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." This will be the generation of them in the flesh that fear God at the time spoken of by the prophet; for these shall *be left*. *I will leave* in the midst of thee, &c. shews that they must be already there, or they could not be left. But our Lord did not confine the promised blessing to the meek of one generation, he stated it generally. It belongs therefore to every generation. But what has become of "*the meek*" of

past generations? Have they received the inheritance?—No. And where are they?—Numbered amongst the dead. The promised inheritance therefore can only be bestowed *after their resurrection*. And this inheritance is none other than that foretold by Daniel the prophet, to which we have before referred: When "the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High."y The existence of the earth after the resurrection of the meek, and the possession of it by them as an inheritance, are conclusions from which there is no escape, if this passage be honestly viewed.

The next passage to which attention will be directed (chap. vi. 9, 10,) tends to confirm the foregoing expositions. Here the great Prophet of the church is teaching the members of that church, how to pray. He gives them seven petitions to bring before their Father in heaven; and, as it might be expected, commences with that, which is the principal end of all the revealed purposes of God with which we are acquainted: I mean the manifestation of the divine glory. But, if the first petition contain the subject of principal importance, the next we should conclude would not be greatly inferior. And what is the next? "*Thy kingdom come*." And the third is like unto it: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." With regard to the former of these, it has evidently a prospective application; or the Lord would not have permitted his church to fall into that very error in the use of this prayer, against which he was guarding her by teaching the same. He had said, "When ye pray use not vain repeti-

w Matt. xi. 29.

x See Investigator, iii. 449.

y Dan. vii. 27.

tions as the heathen do : after this manner therefore pray ye." The kingdom, for which he taught the church to pray, could not have *then* been come, or that would have been a vain petition ; and every time it was repeated a "vain repetition." Neither could it have come since that time, or he would have been bound to have informed his church, by the same authority by which he led her to employ it, to desist from it, so soon as it became, by a change of circumstances, a transgression of his own rule. But this he has never done. Our conclusion, therefore, must be, that the existing circumstances of the world justify the use of it ; and accordingly that *the kingdom*, for which eighteen hundred years since he taught his church to pray, and still permits her to do the same, *is not yet come*. But the third petition establishes this reasoning. It is so closely connected with the foregoing, as at the first sight to lead to the conclusion that it belongs to it ; and a very little examination will confirm this. *Where is the place* or situation of that church, which has been taught by her Lord to pray, "*thy kingdom come ?*" Her place is the *earth*. Then *upon the earth* that kingdom must come, or this petition will never be answered. If the site of the promised kingdom were *heaven*, (as men commonly teach,) then, "may we go to thy

kingdom," would have been more appropriate language, than "*thy kingdom come*." But the third petition asks of God that his will may be done *on earth* as it is in heaven. How is it done in heaven ?—Perfectly. Here then is the measure by which at some time, it will be done on earth. But this necessarily involves a kingdom of God perfectly administered : for where his will is perfectly done, there, and there only, is God perfectly King : the measure of the divine rule being only in proportion to the measure of that obedience which is yielded to it. The two petitions bear out and support each other : both referring to "the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his prophets since the world began."²

One question may here be put, which I will endeavour to answer. Why is this kingdom called the kingdom of the Father, and not the kingdom of the Son ? For this reason, I conceive, amongst others ; —that the Son receives it from the Father as his gift : hence that the Son rules in it, *as the Father's servant*, until the time of its regress into the Father's hand : upon which principle, it is said by the Father, in the second Psalm, anticipating that season, "yet have I set *my king* upon my holy hill of Zion."

W. W. P.

² Acts III. 19.

SATAN BECOME AN ANGEL OF LIGHT; OR DEVICES OF THE LAST DAYS.

No. III.

I have in a former paper pointed out the mischievous consequences arising from the unrestrained publication of blasphemous and infidel opinions, and shown it to be one of those subtle devices of the enemy which are peculiar to "the last days." In my last paper I endeavoured to expose a kindred device; (though at the first glance it appears to be of an opposite character;)—viz. the obscuring and abstracting the true light: for by the one stratagem Satan sows his evil seed, and by the other he prevents the good seed from being sown, and therefore leaves ample space for the tares to luxuriate without check or hindrance. In the present paper I purpose to notice a device which is likewise allied to these, and might indeed with propriety have been brought forward the first in order, since the two last evils may be said, in some measure, to have grown out of it.—I allude to the licentious spirit of *DISSENT AND SCHISM*; a spirit which, equally with the other two devices, approaches us in the garb of an angel of light; and which has grown to maturity and become rife and prevalent, subsequent to the period of the Reformation.

I know that I am about to tread over tender ground, and that the words "*dissent and schism*," may have already startled and dismayed some of the readers of the Investigator. I hope however I am not approaching the subject in that spirit which would recklessly do violence, either to their prejudices or proper feelings; and that I am ready to make every allowance for the pe-

culiar circumstances in which many pious individuals may be placed; but I must not, at the same time, be deterred from exposing what I conceive to be a most extensively mischievous device of Satan, and from plucking the angel's vizard from his face. And the very circumstance, that there are, as I believe, many good men, who are either directly the abettors of this evil, or are indirectly promoting it, is that which prompts me more especially to enter upon it; since darkness must indeed come in a very gradual and delusive form, if it deceive those who are the children of light. In countries indeed where a pure form of religion exists, as in our own, Satan could not hope to prevail with professors, were he avowedly to aim a blow at any important principle of the Gospel: it is by small and almost imperceptible steps of a plausible character, that he in the first instance endeavours to lead them from it; and from the position thus gained he insensibly urges them another and another step, till he finally entangles them in the wily mazes he has spread for them. I wish however to be clearly understood in this matter. I am far from meaning to infer, that there are no constraining and paramount considerations, which may justify men from separating from a corrupt and heretical church; for the Scriptures themselves exhort, in regard to that apostate church set forth in the book of Revelation, under the term *BABYLON*,—"Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."* And there are

* There are many in the present day who are disposed to justify their separation

occasions when we are bound, at any cost, earnestly to contend for the truth of God, and to be valiant for it, even though it may expose us to the reproach of making a party, and being the promoters of dissension and strife.

The best method perhaps of proceeding with the subject will be first to press two *facts*, rather than *arguments*, upon the attention of the reader. The one is, that the Church of Christ is actually at this present time rent and divided into sects, to an extent which is quite unparalleled, throughout the whole period of its history; and so as to make it appear hopeless to many that it can ever be brought into a state of unity again, except by the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have not only dissenters and separatists arrayed against the established church; but we have dissenters and separatists† likewise remarkably divided among themselves; insomuch that it has come to require a pretty large volume only to register the description or "Sketch of all denominations." This is a fact which cannot be honestly denied.

The other fact is, that this state

of things is a great and positive *evil*. I cannot here expect to have all so readily agree with me, as in the former fact: for if the evil were generally felt, surely it would not be promoted to the extent which we see it is. Nevertheless, all who are acquainted with their Bibles must be aware that we are admonished, that there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism;^a that we are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;^b that we are besought not to be many masters;^c but to submit ourselves one to the other, and to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake;^d to endeavour to speak the same things, and to be of the same mind.^e On the other hand, some are denounced, who, though they preached Christ, preached him in a spirit of strife and contention;^f and we are directed to mark those which cause divisions, contrary to Christ's doctrine, and to *avoid* them.^g Yea we are assured that the existence of divisions is a proof that the church is in a *carnal* state;^h and that those who separate themselves are "*sensual*, having not the Spirit:"ⁱ not sensual, as I apprehend, in that grosser degree in which we have now come to use

from the church of England by alleging that she is *Babylon*, and that all established religions are *Babylon*. Whilst however we would come out of the *real* Babylon, we must take care that we do not use lightness and charge any foolishly. One of the characteristics of the Babylon of the Apocalypse is, that she seduces others to drink of the wine of her fornication, and corrupts them with it; and another is, that she persecutes the saints. (Rev. xvii.) Now it is sufficient to observe, in regard to the church of England, that, if her doctrines and practices could be justly termed spiritual *fornication*, she is far from endeavouring to corrupt others with it; being more obnoxious to the charge of supineness, in respect to propagating her sentiments and making proselytes, than with zealotry or bigotry. Neither has she ever been "drunk with the blood of the saints:" for amid all her transgressions and defects, it is difficult to find an instance of persecution unto blood.

† By *Dissenters* I mean those who profess to differ from the doctrines, forms, or government of the Church of England: and by *Separatists* those who in general worship not with the members of that Church, though they profess not to dissent from its doctrines.

^a Ephes. iv. 5. ^b v. 3, 13. ^c Jas. iii. 1. ^d Ephes. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 13.
^e Rom. xii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. ii. 2; iv. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 8.
^f Rom. xvi. 17, 18. ^g Rom. xvi. 17. ^h 1 Cor. iii. 3. ⁱ Jude v. 19.

the word *sensual*; but sensual as being influenced by the spirit or wisdom of the fleshly natural man, instead of by the holy Spirit. That state of things therefore which stands in the way of the unity of God's church, and which produces divisions and strife and contention and confusion,—the very opposite of the fruit which the *Holy Spirit* produces,—must be in itself a great *evil*. He must be blind indeed who cannot see from the word of God, that the Church of God ought to present the picture of a city which is at unity in itself; and that the reverse of that picture must be grievous to that "God which maketh men to be of one mind in a house."*

But now, to return to the devices of Satan in this matter, this evil has not grown to its present height all at once, but men have been almost imperceptibly led on. Some indeed have been at all times led to act with headiness and rashness, impelled only by their own passions and blind conceits; but this has nevertheless not been the case in general. I have already intimated, that it is necessary to make a stand for vital truth, whatsoever may be the consequences; and some have been cast out on this very account and persecuted. Instead of having separated themselves, wicked men in power in the church have hated and reviled them, and separated them

from their communion.* And others, though not actually ejected by force, have perhaps had a sufficiently conscientious reason for separating themselves. But this is what Satan has taken advantage of, and used as a snare and device, in order almost entirely to destroy unity from among men. He has prompted multitudes to do that rashly, unadvisedly, and recklessly, or at least on very insufficient grounds, which holy men have done only by constraint, or with the utmost caution and fear and trembling. And thus the evil has grown and increased into a mighty torrent, which has overwhelmed all respect and consideration, among the generality, for those truths which God has revealed for our guidance in this matter. Owing to the present frequency of the offence, men are brought at last to consider it *no* offence, no evil at all;—they rush fearlessly into error without enquiry, and often without a motive at all, or from the merest caprice, and they are ready to cry down, as the intolerant, narrow-minded, bigoted agents of Satan, those who would remind them of their danger. The very notion of submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, is now scorned and trampled upon by multitudes who profess religion, because it interferes with their own pleasure, and taste and conceit and

* There are many practical evils resulting from this state of things which are worthy of notice. For example, how commonly (as hinted at in my last paper) may we observe instances of men, who have some sense of religion, combining together for social objects, as a Club or Book Society, who are obliged to lay it down as a standing rule, that religion shall be excluded, lest it beget altercation. But why should there be this apprehension?—It is created by *Dissent*. When Dissenters unite for purposes of *education*, they are obliged also to exclude religion as the basis of it, because they cannot agree upon the particular form and tenets of religion which shall be inculcated. The facility likewise which Dissent offers of enabling an individual who has misconducted himself in one society to take refuge in another, prevents the possibility of properly enforcing discipline and maintaining due and necessary subordination. Thus though there may be in Dissent, doctrinally speaking, as the strength of iron; there is practically the potter's clay mixed with it, which prevents all real adhesion, and neutralizes the strength.

* Luke vi. 22.

settled habits, and with the liberty which they imagine they possess of "heaping to themselves teachers."

2. But this is not all. Satan having effected this work, and brought the church into this state of confusion and division, proceeds next to devices which he justifies on the ground of this very state of things. Some he encourages to rest altogether in neglect and disregard of religion, living practically and often avowedly as infidels. "How are we to know, (say they,) what we are to believe, even if we were disposed to inquire.—See the multitude of various religious opinions in the world!—Scarcely any two are agreed together in all things, and yet all are quite positive that they are in the right!—To whom then shall we turn?" Another class, whilst they retain the form of godliness, are led to treat with indifference some of the most fundamental doctrines of Scripture;—falling back on this state of confusion created by Satan in the church. They argue that they consider these things merely matter of opinion; that every one is left to his own judgment in them; that they have known very moral and amiable persons, as *they* think,—persons quite as good as some of the saints,—who have not thought such doctrines of any consequence, but on the contrary, have opposed them; and then perhaps they add—

For modes of faith let senseless bigots fight,
His can't be wrong whose *life* is in the right.

They are too much blinded to perceive, that they are actually contending for their *own* mode of belief, and are complacently insinuating that they conceive their *own* life to be right, and such as is calculated to challenge the regard of the Almighty.

But Satan is now urging men onwards to opinions of a more infi-

del and apostate character even than these, and still founded upon that work of confusion which I have already enlarged upon. They proceed to conclude, that there is something in the natural constitution of the mind of man which pre-disposes him to particular opinions, or to some one mode of faith, and which entirely prevents him from understanding and submitting to the orthodox belief. They consider it a mere accident, what he inclines or happens to believe; that he has no more control over it himself, than in chusing the country in which he will be born; and that he is consequently no more accountable to God for his faith, than he is for the color of his skin. Thus is man released from his responsibility to God, by making his unbelief of the truths of divine revelation no sin, but an error or defect of his nature which God hath implanted in it; and thus likewise is the whole word of God rendered nugatory, because uncertain. For if we cannot be assured of the truths it contains by any divine teaching or demonstration,—if we can arrive at no certain conviction or persuasion that we are right,—there must be doubting and mistrusting instead of faith, and the ministers of the Gospel have no right to press upon us the truths of the Bible more than any other truths with authority, and consequently we may as well shut up our Bibles, and turn our churches and chapels into barns, for the whole of Christianity is in that case no better than a fable. And, once more, it has tended to attach a *reproach and stigma* to many of the most solemn truths revealed to us in the Scriptures; insomuch that those, who in the present day insist upon those truths, are denounced as most uncharitable and contracted; and were the Apostles themselves to

appear in this generation and preach them, without being known as apostles, they would doubtless fall under a similar reproach. When our Lord says "He that believeth not shall be damned;"¹—When Peter says, "There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ;"^m and that "without faith it is impossible to please God;"ⁿ and when St. John says, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;"^o in all these instances their testimony is directly opposed to this mischievous doctrine of Satan; and therefore this doctrine of Satan contradicts the doctrine of God, and brands it as merciless and intolerant.

Such is the web which Satan weaves! and thus do his cockatrice eggs when crushed break forth into a viper! For I repeat, that this latter evil has grown up out of the former; it is the circumstance that men, destitute of faith and of spiritual judgment, are first dazzled by the circumstance of seeing around them so many conflicting tenets, and so much dogmatical confidence in all; and instead of being enabled to perceive, that an enemy hath done this, they are deluded by that enemy to conclude, either that there is no possibility of ascertaining what is divine truth; or that, when it is ascertained, it is but some abstract dogmas of no real importance or practical utility.

3. I must not conclude this subject here, lest it should be inferred by any that I conceive there is after all no rule or test or criterion by which the anxious inquirer, who desires to be right with God, may be guided and assured in these matters, without blindly surrendering his understanding to what may appear to him

the authority of man only. The *word of God* will afford us such a criterion, and serve at the same time to put to the proof the real disposition of the heart towards God.—"*If any man will do (i. e. wills to do) HIS will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*"^p Here is a plain and simple rule. If any are truly desirous to please God, and seek to know what obedience he requires of them, in order that they may render it;—if any can say meekly and sincerely "Did I but only know what is the will of God, then would I set about most heartily to perform it, and give up any thing that stands in the way;"—then he is one who wills to do the will of God, and the Lord is pledged to guide him into the truth. For "good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide with judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."^q There can be no instance brought forward of a man, who, with a sound mind has sought a knowledge of the Lord's will towards himself, with a real desire to perform it, who has not been brought, after patiently waiting upon the Lord, and following on to know him, to the saving knowledge of the truth in Christ. And this is the sentence of condemnation written beforehand against all those who are not really in heart disposed to do the Lord's will: "that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil!"^r

I would conclude by affectionately urging upon those who conceive themselves established in the faith, but who may be among the number of separatists or dissenters, two considerations. I presume not to judge them; I rather entreat as a brother,

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

^m Acts iv. 12.

^p John vii. 17.

^q Psalm xxv. 8, 9.

ⁿ Heb. xi. 6.

^o 1 John v. 19.

^r John iii. 19.

beseeking them to be very jealous of themselves in this matter.

First then, is it not generally asserted by religious professors, that the points upon which good men differ in the church of Christ are *non-essentials*, whilst in essentials they agree? And if this be the case, are the unity and peace and subordination of the church of God matters of no moment to put into the opposite scale and weigh against these non-essentials? *These* things cannot be matters of indifference; for they are plainly and largely insisted upon in the word of God. Is it right again, for the sake of non-essentials, to refuse to be subject, but rather to rend and divide the church, when the Scriptures enjoin us—"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake?" If believers are to submit themselves to each other, and to endeavour to be of one mind, how is this to be brought about, but by those at least, who are sensible of the propriety of such a spirit, first denying themselves in *their* opinions, or at all events not urging them to the length of division and separation? and what opinions ought they to be so immediately prepared not thus to push to extremities, as those which they are disposed to admit, in their calm and dispassionate moments, are not essential to salvation? I cannot hope that all will be led, who profess Christ, to see their error by what I here urge; but I shall bless God if only *one* is led to re-examine his foundation in this matter, and to escape rebuke in the day of the Lord's appearing.

I say I cannot hope that *all* will be led to see their error in this matter; indeed I expect the very contrary; and that "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."s

And the second and last point to which I desire to draw attention is, that it is clearly revealed in Scripture that the last apostasy, or last form of antichrist, will be greatly promoted by professors of Christianity who are *heretics and schismatics*. In the second Epistle of Peter false prophets are spoken of, who are privily to bring in damnable heresies, "*denying the Lord that bought them.*" (Chap. II. 1.) They are described as moved by *covetousness*, (vv. 3, 14,) in which respect they "follow the way of Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." (v. 15.) They are farther described as walking in the lust of uncleanness and *despising government*,—"presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of *dignities.*" (v. 10.) They speak *great swelling words* of vanity; (v. 18;) they make great talk about *liberty*, but are themselves the servants of corruption; (v. 19;) and especially they turn to scoff the promise of the second advent of the Lord. (chap. III. 3, 4.) That they are to appear in the "last days" is also declared in the last cited place; and it is farther apparent from its being said, in chap. II. 3, that their "*judgment, now of a long time, lingereth not.*" Now whoever will attentively compare the Epistle of Jude will perceive, that he speaks of precisely the same persons, and uses almost the same expressions; and he declares of them,—"These be they who *separate themselves*, sensual, having not the Spirit." (v. 19.) And thus as Peter describes them to be *heretics*, so Jude declares them to be *schismatics*. If we turn to St. John we shall find him alluding to the same men, who *deny the Father and the Son*; and he declares them to be limbs of *Antichrist*;t and farther says—"They

s 2 Tim. III. 13.

t 1st Epl. II. 22.

went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have no doubt continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us."^u In this it is again evident that they are *separatists*; and they are also declared to be *false prophets, deceivers, and seducers*, in like manner as Peter and Jude describe them.^w St. Paul foretels, that men would arise, from out of the bosom of the church, "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them;"^x and appears to describe the same parties in 2 Tim. iii. 1—5, as being the men who shall be the cause of the *perilous times* of the last days. They are likened to Jannes and Jambres

who withstood Moses; (v. 8) and Timothy is admonished that the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, "but, after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

I am very far from meaning to insinuate that all dissenters or separatists are like these: but it cannot be denied that *these are* dissenters and separatists; and I therefore once more would exhort the Reader to beware of Satan as an angel of light in this matter, and to be very jealous of *seeming* to be identified with them, so far as any of these characteristics are concerned, without a most sure and satisfactory warrant to their consciences before God for so doing.

BETA.

^u *vs.* 18, 19.

^w See 1st Epl. ii. 26; iv. 1, and 2nd Epl. v. 7.

^x Acts xx. 30.

ON THE PROPHETICAL CHARACTER OF THE PSALMS.

No. III.

PSALM V.

Verses 1—3. *Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord: in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*

In this Psalm David resorts to prayer, and to encouraging himself in the Lord's promises, and in the righteousness of his character, all which form his source of consolation amid the surrounding ungodliness. There is abundant proof however that it is of no "private interpretation," but that it will be particularly suitable for the church during the abounding iniquity of the last days.

There are some obscure intimations of the time of *crisis* in these three first verses. He specially addresses the Lord as his *King* and his *God*: a circumstance of which he is reminded by the existing spirit of rebellion against "the Lord's anointed," or Christ, as typified in his own person.—Whilst therefore by this title he recognises his God as one who "will be king, be the people never so impatient;" he at the same time glances towards that period when he shall be manifested as king upon his holy hill of Zion, and all things shall be put under his feet: for this is a time to which all prophecy, and this title of *Messiah*, especially looks.

There is also a particular use of

the term *Morning* in some of the Psalms, which seems to be intended in this place. The day of vengeance and sudden destruction to the ungodly is the time also of the deliverance of the church; wherefore that which is the time of darkness to the one, is as the morning light to the other; just as the pillar of the cloud in the wilderness showed darkness to the Egyptians and was a light to the Israelites. In this two-fold view it is sometimes alluded to; as when Joel declares the *day* of the Lord, to be "a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the *morning spread upon the mountains*."^a So Amos, addressing the ungodly, cries, "woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is *darkness and not light*."—"Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light; even very dark, and no brightness in it?"^b In Psalm xlii. 5, 6, we have, "God shall help her, and that *right early*: the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted:"—the original of which is, as given in the Septuagint, "*early in the morning*." So in Psalm xlii. 14—"Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them *in the morning*." Isaiah more precisely distinguishes the period of trouble as commencing at what he calls *eventide*, and the destruction taking place just before the *morning light*: "And behold at eventide trouble; and before the morning he is not! This is the portion of them that spoil us and the lot of them that rob us."^c Thus then, in the Psalm before us, the Psalmist seems to look forward to the period when his voice shall be heard with the shout of exultation and song of deliverance.

There is also an inconsistency

in his speaking in the second verse, as if he were already engaged in prayer, and crying unto his king; and in the third verse speaking, as if he purposed to defer his prayer until the morning. And the words "*my prayer*," in the latter verse, are not in the original, but it rather means, according to the Septuagint,—"in the morning will I stand before thee, and shall see." The whole therefore refers to a great and special time of deliverance from the church's enemies, which the King of saints, "the bright and morning star," will give to his people, when he shall roll away their reproach and lift up their heads. The next three verses confirm this view.—

Verses 4—6. *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.*

Here the time is plainly adverted to, when the Lord will root out from his kingdom every thing which offends and does iniquity. That "the foolish shall not stand in his sight," is the same as what we have already had in Psalm i. 5—"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;"—and it is therefore put in opposition to verse 3, which has just been considered—"In the morning will I stand before thee and will look up;" and also to verse 7—"But as for me I will come into thy house [i. e. into "the congregation of the righteous"] in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. For though the primary occasion of these words is, probably, the determination of the Psalmist to

^a Joel ii. 2.

^b Amos v. 18, 20.

^c Isa. xvii. 14.

worship in the material temple, (or rather the *tabernacle*, for the temple was not built in his days;) yet, as before stated, we must not rest in a private interpretation;^d but must conclude that he, "being a prophet,"^e looks ultimately at the true temple or house of God, in the midst of whom God hath promised to dwell.

Before we pass on likewise we must notice farther, in the sixth verse, another instance of the Antichrist being spoken of both in the aggregate or mystical *body*, and then in the *head*—"Thou shalt destroy *them* that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful *man*." And the speaking *leasing*, (i. e. with plausible, flattering, and deceitful words,) is a special character of the Antichrist, who "comes in by flattering," and of his apostate crew;—with their tongue they use deceit, and flatter with their tongue. (See also verse 9.)

Verse 8. *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy ways straight before my face.*

This petition of the Psalmist admonishes the church of one of her great practical duties in the time of apostasy and peril; viz. a humble looking unto the Lord for divine guidance. The enemies of godliness will on the one hand watch for the halting of the Lord's people, and greatly triumph if they fall into any inconsistency: and on the other hand there will be great danger, in consequence of the prevalence of specious but hollow principles, that even the righteous may become unconsciously infected by them; for they shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.^f Alas! we see, in the present day, how dazzled many professors of religion are by these principles, and how unable they are to discern the righteousness

of the Lord, in numerous particulars of a practical nature that might be pointed out. They are leaning to their own understanding, and are captivated with the wisdom of man; and thus are their footsteps insensibly entangled in the snares of the fowler; and the spurious liberalism of the day, on the one hand, and the spirit of fanaticism, on the other, are leading them into paths that deviate in the end from the righteousness of God. It is most desirable that the Lord's people therefore should be duly sensible of their own blindness, lest they become confident and wise in their own conceits,—that they should rather become fools in order that they may be wise,—and daily look up to God for direction, and to make their path straight amidst the crooked politics and the erroneous religious principles of the day, so that they may have "a right judgment in all things."

Verse 9. *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

This verse fully establishes, as before has been noticed, the interpretation given of the sixth verse; and shews that a principal feature of this Antichristian band will be a plausible and specious profession of principles, whilst all is unfaithful, hollow, and selfish within. But what is particularly important to notice here is, that this verse is among the passages quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans *III.* to prove that the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, are under sin, and are altogether become unprofitable: for he insists, that because these things are written in the Law, or Old Testament, they are therefore addressed especially to them who were under the legal dispensation, and described

^d 2 Pet. *I.* 20.

^e Acts *II.* 30.

^f Matt. *XXIV.* 24.

their apostasy and warned *them*; ^g for it would be of no use indeed to warn those to whom the revelation was not immediately given. And the object of the apostle farther is, to illustrate the character of the Jewish nation generally in that remarkable crisis of its history in which he lived, in which they were filling up the measure of their father's iniquities, because then wrath was coming on them to the uttermost.^h For it is in times of *crisis*, that the Scriptures of God become more especially applicable to the circumstances both of saints and sinners. In ordinary times God imposes many restraints upon the wrath of men,ⁱ and in various ways represses it; insomuch that the enmity of the carnal heart has in numerous instances no opportunity of manifesting its malignity, and many who are yet carnal pass for decent and moral, or even religious characters. It is in times of *crisis* that God loosens these moral restraints, and affords greater scope for the evil principles of the natural man to develop themselves; and then persons, who had previously walked respectably, betray that there was no root in them, and the great multitude fall precipitately into evil, as the swine who had been quietly grazing rushed headlong into the sea, as soon as permission was given to the devils to take full possession of them.

But it must not be forgotten that as the Scriptures are particularly applicable to times of crisis, or the winding up of a dispensation of mercy, so are they still more especially adapted to the *last* crisis, which will be the winding up of all. And, more especially, if this verse, because it is contained in the Law, spake not so much to the men of David's time, as to *all* who were

under the Law; so likewise, because it is now by St. Paul quoted from the Law and engrafted into the Gospel, it speaks most significantly to all who are *under* the Gospel, or *New Testament Dispensation*, and warns them of that greater crisis of apostasy which is coming.

Verse 10. The Psalmist however now again, but in the imperative form, predicts their ruin:—“*Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.*” Their wrath appears to be only directed against man, and the powers wielded by him; but it is in reality directed against God: for it is the principles of divine revelation, as followed out in the politics and institutions of kingdoms and societies, that are attacked by them: and though these are charged home by them on men, as the fruits of their bigotry and fanaticism, they are as much raging against God as Paul was, when he was brought up in his course by—“Saul, Saul, wherefore persecutest thou ME?”^k And it is farther worthy of remark, that the time of trouble and peril which terminates in their destruction is the fruit of their “*own counsels*,”—they dig a pit for others and fall into the midst of it themselves.^l

It may not be amiss to notice, as this imperative form of prediction frequently occurs in the Psalms, the absurd prejudice which many, who profess to be believers, entertain against it when it is imprecatory. It arises from the squeamishness and unbelief of the human heart, which affects, in its presumption and morbid sentimentality, to be more merciful than God. It is the identical spirit, which, when the earth opened and swallowed up Korah and his

^g Rom. III. 13 and 19. ^h Matt. XXII. 32; 1 Thess. II. 16. ⁱ Ps. LXXVI. 10.
^k Acts IX. 4. ^l Ps. LVII. 6.

rebellious company, caused the congregation to murmur against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord."^m Such persons however lose sight of the fact, that it is not so much David's prayer, as the Holy Ghost prophesying in him; and as well therefore might they object to the same Holy Spirit chusing the imperative or supplicating form of foretelling good to the people of God; which he does in the last verses of this Psalm.—

Verses 11, 12. *But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

It is only the first clause however of these two verses that are in the imperative mood in the Vulgate and Septuagint versions: the remainder are in the future tense of the indicative; and vary somewhat in the particulars of the blessedness promised, though they are substantially the same. The two verses are as follow:—"And let all those be glad who hope in thee. In the eternal age they shall rejoice; and Thou wilt dwell in the midst of them; and all shall glory in Thee who delight in thy Name. For thou wilt bless the Righteous One, O Lord: as with a shield of favor Thou hast crowned us." The reader is probably aware that the same form in the Hebrew expresses both the imperative and future indicative.

PSALM VI.

The ultimate and prophetic scope of this Psalm is the *humiliation of the Church* as she passes into that tribulation which is brought on by the Antichristian faction of the last days; and here the Spirit of Christ

sympathises with his members, and speaks as in their name. And it is a blessed consolation, when duly considered, that the pathetic prayer which follows is the Spirit's own inditing, who thus beforehand pleads in their behalf.

Verses 1—7. *O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord: heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*

It is evident from this, as well as from numerous other passages of Scripture, that the church will be overtaken by this tribulation, and that the souls of the righteous will be more than ever vexed by the conversation of the wicked. But this temporary domination of the ungodly, during which all the foundations of righteousness will be cast down, will be overruled for the purification or *chastening* of the church: (v. 1.) for judgment must first begin at the house of God,^o and the righteous will *scarcely* be saved. For the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; and many a minister will suffer loss at this time, and see his work burnt up and melt from before him,^p his professing people not being rooted and grounded in those truths, nor partakers of that Spirit, which alone can sustain the fiery trial. The bones of Christ's mystical body will now be "*sore vexed*;" (v. 2.) and they will wonder "*how long*" the Lord will leave

^m Numb. xvi. 41.

^o 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

^p 1 Cor. iii. 13—15.

his darling among the lions, before he arises and breaks their jaw bones; and they will be weary with groaning: for indeed "except those days should be shortened no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."^q It is in anticipation of this period that the Holy Ghost in Peter exhorts us: "Beloved, think it not *strange* concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:"^r showing how important it is to be duly apprised of these things, lest they come unawares to any, and take them by surprise and unprepared, and they be scorched by the flame and burned up.

It is farther worthy of remark, that the object of the true church amid this tribulation is, to glorify God; which shews that the chastening is effectual in them that love God and are called according to his purpose. For they only fear being overwhelmed by it on account of God's cause, lest he should be left without a witness: so at least I understand the fifth verse;—the expressions "*no remembrance of thee,*" and "*who shall give thee thanks,*" having the farther sense, in the original, of making mention of God and glorifying him by confessing his name before men. This evidently cannot be accomplished in the grave: for however departed souls may be enabled to render their *own* praises to God, as the Apocalypse plainly teaches us they do, yet they cannot longer confess God, or make mention of him, before men in the flesh.

Verses 8, 9. And it is also evident that the church, though she passes into the tribulation, will be *preserved* in it. This may indeed be inferred from the fact, that the whole prayer, as before observed, is of the Holy Ghost; and we cannot suppose that

^q Matt. xxiv. 22. ^r 1 Pet. iv. 12.

God ever prepares a petition for his church which he does not purpose in his own good time to grant. Here however there is a direct assurance of it follows:—*Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.* Then follows another imprecatory prophecy.—

Verse 10. *Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed; let them return and be ashamed suddenly:*—or rather—Let them be *turned backward* and suddenly put to confusion!

"So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord! but let all them that love Him, be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!"^t

PSALM VII.

The Psalm we now enter upon would require an extended notice, were it not that most of the particulars it contains have already been anticipated; so that to place the text simply before the reader will in general be sufficient to lead him to a right apprehension of the prophetic view of the subject.

Verses 1, 2. *O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*

This evidently alludes to the same subject as in the last Psalm,—viz. the tribulation of the church from the faction of evil doers; which faction is here again addressed as the mystical body of Antichrist—"Save me from all *them* that persecute me; lest *he* tear my soul like a lion."

Verses 3—5. *O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with*

^t Judges v. 31; see also Matt. xiii. 42.

me ; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy ;) let the enemy persecute my soul ; and take it, yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

The Targum and several eminent Rabbins agree with the Septuagint in rendering the fourth verse differently, which will make the passage thus : " O Lord my God, if I have done this ; if there be iniquity in my hands ; if I have rendered evil to those who have recompensed evil to me ;—Then let me fall as a fool by my enemies ; let the enemy &c. The meekness and righteousness of the persecuted party is here insisted on. This is preeminent in the instance of the head, Christ Jesus : but the Church has also a righteousness, through the Spirit of Christ, which she may plead in some circumstances before the world ; though she has no room for boasting before God, who hath wrought all her works in her. It seems then from this, that the hand from which the blow will come will have been in the first instance apparently friendly, but will now act treacherously. And though the visible church will doubtless always have a sufficiency of defects to afford a handle to ungodly men to mouth against her, as they do this day ; yet shall she, in her mystical body, be enabled to plead her benevolence toward her enemies.

I need not say what melancholy indications there are in the present day of a *beginning* of these things in one section of the visible church ; which, whilst in a state of unparalleled revival, as acknowledged by her adversaries, has been unprovokedly attacked by those, who, only just the moment before, were affecting to boast of the peace and harmony existing between her members and themselves, and the glori-

ous sight displayed to the world by the union of Christians of all denominations. The next verses however again assure us, that the lifting up of the horn of the wicked on high will be suddenly confounded.—

Verse 6. *Arise O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies : and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.* "The judgment commanded," is evidently the same as "the judgment written" of Psalm cxliv. 9, and has been already treated of in Psalm i. 5,—*"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous :"* which congregation of the righteous is also the same as that mentioned in verse 7 of this Psalm—*So shall the congregation of the people compass Thee about : for their sakes therefore return Thou on high.*

And the distinction in verse 6 of Psalm i. why the righteous shall stand in the judgment, (viz. because the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous ; but the way of the ungodly shall perish ;) is also sustained here :—*The Lord shall judge the people : judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to the integrity that is in me. Oh ! let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end : but establish the just. For the righteous God TRIETH THE HEARTS AND REINS ; (whereby he knows the way of the righteous) My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart ; God judgeth the righteous ; and God is angry with the wicked every day.* Verses 8—11.

In all this Christ cannot be speaking of himself individually, as the head of the mystical body ; for he is the Lord here supplicated, as the judge of the people and of the righteous ; (vv. 8, 11,) for all judgment is committed to the Son.^w

^w John v. 22.

The party supplicating must therefore be the church, who pleads that uprightness of purpose and intent which she has through grace;—the walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh; and unto such there is no condemnation.* Whatever may be the malignity of those who lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth them:† for indeed Christ does so far speak here, as that when the Spirit says, "Judge me O Lord according to my righteousness," it is *Christ's* righteousness which belongs to them,—which is made theirs,—which is unto and upon them,—and which is also fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

The 11th verse has a beautiful turn given to it in the Septuagint—"God is a righteous judge, both mighty and forbearing, not being daily angered,"—or, as St. Paul has it of *Charity*, "is not easily provoked."*

Verses 12, 13. *If he turn not He will whet his sword; He hath bent his bow and made it ready: He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; He ordaineth His arrows against the persecutors.*

There is the same principle constantly sustained in these Psalms of referring both to Christ and Antichrist, sometimes as the head, sometimes as the members, sometimes as the whole body. Here it is, "God

bath prepared for *him* the instruments of death," as if speaking of a single individual; then, in the next clause, "He ordaineth his arrows against the *persecutors*," in the plural.

The metaphor here made use of to indicate the coming wrath of God against the persecutors; viz.—his *ordained arrows*, plainly points out at the same time the signal period which the Holy Ghost has in view. Take the following instances:—"He sent out his *arrows* and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them." This is when he bows the heavens and comes down at the intercession of his church.† "Thine *arrows* are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee."‡ This is when the King comes forth in his glory, his right hand teaching him *terrible* things, immediately previous to his nuptials with the church. Again, this false or leasing *tongue* is to be punished with "sharp *arrows* of the Mighty, with coals of juniper."§ And when Habakkuk describes the Lord going forth for the salvation of the people, wounding the head over the house of the wicked, marching through the land in indignation and thrashing the heathen in anger, he says, "at the light of thine *arrows* they went,—at the shining of thy glittering spear."||

Verses 14—16. *Behold he travail-*

* Rom. viii. 1. † Ibid. v. 33. ‡ Ps. xlv. 5. § Ps. cxx. 4. || Hab. iii. 11.

* I ought at an earlier period to have observed, that in preferring the Septuagint translation, as I often do, I have the high authority of Christ himself and the apostles who quote that version. Besides this, Reeves, in his able "Collation of the Hebrew and Greek Texts of the Psalms," has shewn that the variation between our English version and the Greek may almost always be accounted for by the arbitrary placing of the *points*, which are no part of the original text; that where our Translators differ they in numerous instances rely upon the single authority of Pagninus, or some other Hebrew scholar who has preceded them: while on the other hand, the authorities of Jewish Rabbins and Christian scholars of the first eminence are to be found in every instance, more or less, for the Septuagint version. Thus he at the same time establishes the authenticity of the Hebrew text and the fidelity of the Septuagint translation.

† Ps. xviii. 14; and 2 Sam. xxii. 15. The same thing, and almost in the same words, is expressed in Ps. cxliv. 5, 6.

eth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

Here again the Antichrist, or *head* over the houses of the wicked, is alone mentioned; though the whole of his ungodly household are included. And again we have it plainly asserted, as intimated in verse 10 of Psalm v, that he falls by his own counsels, and is snared in his own toils: having sown the wind, he reaps the whirlwind.^c It is especially worthy of notice, in reference to the present times, that it is his mischief and violent dealing that are recompensed on his own pate. Of this character are the principles of insubordination and agitation, or violence and strife, by which popular objects are now sought to be obtained; and which must ultimately

recoil on those who promote them. It is the violence and strife which the Lord spies in the city that causes him to bring on his windy storm and tempest;^d and thus "with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down."^e

Oh! how refreshing, amid the clamour of this "strife of tongues," which is already begun, and the "violence" which is already "risen up into a rod of wickedness,"^f to know that we have a covenant God who is earnestly mindful of his people, and who is then about to lay bare his arm in their behalf, and take to him his great power. He admonishes us, when we see these things begin to come to pass, to lift up our heads, for our salvation draweth nigh; and presently all those who trust in him *will praise the Lord according to his righteousness, and will sing praise to the Name of the Lord Most High.*—Verse 17.

ABDIEL.

^c Hosea viii. 7.

^d Ps. lv. 8, 9.

^e Rev. xviii. 21.

^f Ezek. vii. 11.

ON ANTICHRIST.

Of the many deep and momentous truths which are unfolded to the church by the sure word of prophecy, there are none perhaps of more serious and pressing importance than those which concern the revelation, the operations, and the downfall of Antichrist. It is proposed in this paper to inquire into the testimony of the Scriptures on this subject; taking as the basis and guide of our search the words of the Apostle Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 1—12.

The intention of the Apostle, in this portion of the epistle, is to warn the church of an apostacy which

should arise previous to the coming of the Lord; by which, as by a sign, they would be informed of the nearness of his approach, inasmuch as he would destroy the head and leader of the apostacy "by the Spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming." By attending to this prediction they would not be "shaken in mind nor troubled" to the neglecting of their proper duties, in the expectation of the immediate appearing of the Lord, which they so eagerly desired.

It will be desirable to divide the matter of the prophecy under con-

sideration into distinct heads; that by comparing the different Scriptures which appear to speak to the same point, the concurring testimony of the whole may be more easily perceived. The first head will contain the announcement of—

I. *The apostacy which should take place before the Lord's coming.* The terms in which this announcement is made would lead us to expect something definite and general, affecting the whole professing church. It is called (*ἡ ἀποστασία*) the apostacy, to distinguish it from the falling away of particular churches or bodies of men, and to mark it as that of which the apostle had already warned the church at Thessalonica. (v. 5.)

Now such an apostacy is predicted both expressly and by implication in many places of Scripture. The apostle Paul (in 1 Tim. iv. 1—3) declares the express testimony of the Spirit, that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,” (literally *apostatize*.)* In the 2nd epistle chap. iii. he warns Timothy that “in the last days, perilous times shall come,” when the evil passions of men, being freed from the restraints till then imposed on them, shall manifest their pernicious influence on society, by the general production of those bitter fruits which are now met with under various disguises, and are attended with a measure of disgrace.†

In the 4th chapter he again alludes to the dislike of the truth which should be manifested at a time then future, but which appears from the context to have a connexion with the coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostles Peter and Jude affirm in the strongest terms the evil character of the men of “*the last times*.”^a They are represented as false teachers; corrupt and filthy men; despisers and blasphemers of dignities; covetous, like Balaam; murderers, like Cain; gainsayers, like Korah; and in this class are probably to be found those “scorners” who shall tauntingly ask the expectants of the Lord, “Where is the promise of his coming?” St. John also gives a mark of the Antichrist which strikingly corresponds with the doctrine of the false teachers spoken of by the two former apostles: compare 1 John ii. 22; iv. 3 with 2 Pet. ii. 1 and Jude v. 4.

How remarkably coincident are these testimonies of the apostles with the description given by our Lord of the character of the men who shall be living at the time of his re-appearing. “There shall be false Christs and false prophets, who shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that if possible they shall deceive the very elect.” “And as it was in the days of Noah, and as in the days of Lot, so shall

* It has been asserted by some who have seen nothing more than the Papal apostacy in 1 Tim. iv. that the expression *ὑστεροῦς καιροῖς* signifies a different period from that denoted by the expression *εσχάταις ἡμέραις* in 2 Tim. iii. (See Morning Watch. vol. I. p. 108.) I think this is an hypercritical distinction, and one which will not serve to disunite these two prophecies, if they are considered with reference to their distinguishing features. The former appears to me to contain an intimation of every remarkable particular of the ultimate apostacy.

† A specimen has been afforded to professing Christendom in the French Revolution at the close of the last century. I would beg to refer the reader to the 14th of Abdiel's Essays, which may perhaps impress him with the idea which it forcibly conveyed to my own mind,—that we are witnessing the rapid approach of the period foretold by the Apostle,—and that the evil day is nearer than we may be disposed to allow.

^a 2 Pet. ii. and iii.; Jude vv. 15, 18.

it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed." "Recklessness, violence, and extraordinary wickedness distinguished both those times." "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;"—they pursued the affairs of the world regardless of the warnings given unto them,—saying to themselves, "peace and safety" when sudden destruction came upon them; as it *shall come* upon the careless and ungodly of the latter day.^b

But the grand feature of the apostacy, as is proved by Bp. Newton, is *idolatry*—the giving to another the worship and honour due to God only. And by this mark the bishop would fasten on the church of Rome the charge of having fulfilled both the Scriptures in 2 Thess. ii. and 1 Tim. iv. as well as those in Daniel vii. and xi. Now from verse 4 of the chapter under consideration it appears, (and it will be shewn more fully hereafter,) that the *object* of worship is *the man of sin*, "who sitteth in the temple of God, as God." In the Apocalypse chap. xiii. a beast is described having seven heads and ten horns, to whom, as well as to the dragon who gives him "his power and his seat and great authority," *the whole world*, except the elect, give worship and adoration. This worship is given at the command of another beast with two horns, (v. 12) who is elsewhere called the false prophet—who makes an image of the first beast, and causes worship to be paid to that also. (vv. 14, 15.) This is enforced on pain of death, and consequently a great persecution of the saints is carried on by these beasts. (vv. 7, 15.)

Does it not appear that these Scriptures all refer to the same period of time? And does it not ap-

pear that there is predicted in them a *general* apostacy, distinguished by a denial of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,—by idolatrous worship,—by persecution of the saints,—and by an universal degeneracy of morals and the prevalence of violence, fraud, blasphemy, and every species of wickedness? And let the marks of similarity between the *man of sin* and the first beast of Revelations xiii. be carefully observed.

The second portion of the prophecy will set forth—

II. THE HEAD OF THE APOSTACY—*the Man of sin—the Wicked one*. Concerning him several particulars are mentioned.—

1. He is called the *Son of Perdition*. This expression is applied to no one else save Judas the traitor. Many there are indeed who go into perdition by "the broad road," as it is written in Matt. vii. 13, Phil. iii. 19; but the man of sin has the title by preeminence. And perhaps there may be an implied reference to the sudden destruction which will overtake him and consume him at the Lord's coming.

Now in Rev. xvii. 8, we find a beast described as coming up from the bottomless pit and going into perdition. (v. 11.) He might therefore, according to the Hebrew idiom, be called a *son of perdition*. And in Rev. xix. 19—21, we read that the beast and false prophet, which are evidently the same as are described in chap. xiii. are *cast alive into the lake of fire*, and are thus distinguished from the remnant who are slain by the sword of the Lord. The beast and his coadjutor *go into perdition* at once. Their fate is the same as that of the beast in chap. xvii. And the actions of these are the same; both being engaged in a conspiracy against Christ and his

^b Matt. xxiv. 37—39; Luke xvii. 26—30; 1 Thess. v. 3.

saints, and are overcome by him while thus employed; (v. 13, 14)—and their form (each having seven heads and ten horns) is the same also. There can be but little doubt therefore that they are the same, viewed under different aspects. But we observed under the last head a remarkable similarity between the man of sin and the ten horned beast of the 13th Rev. We have in this another feature of resemblance: the former is expressly called the son of perdition, which applies equally to the latter. This consideration will afford a strong proof that they are one and the same.

2. *He is distinguished as an opposer of God and a blasphemous usurper of Divine honours.* Opposition to God is a characteristic of the men whom St. Peter describes in his 2nd epistle, II. 1,—“They deny the Lord that bought them.” But in Rev. XIII. we have the description of one who not only claims divine honours, but wears upon his seven heads the names of *blasphemy*, and opens his mouth to *blaspheme God his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven.* In chap. XVII. a scarlet coloured beast is seen of the same form as that of chap. XIII. 3, *full of names of blasphemy.* This power is further described as being the eighth after seven kings therein mentioned, and of the seven. (vv. 10, 11.) His *blasphemy* is another mark of his identity with the beast in chap. XIII.

This blasphemous character of the man of sin leads us to notice another place of Scripture; viz. Dan. VII. Here we find four beasts arising one after another; the fourth of which has ten horns, and another little horn comes up amongst them, before whom 3 of the ten are plucked up, and consequently he becomes the *eighth* instead of the *eleventh*. (vv. 8, 23, 24.) This horn has eyes like

the eyes of man and a *mouth speaking great things*, which we are informed in v. 25 *are words against the Most High*; and he wears out the saints of the Most High, and they are given into his hand for a time, times and the dividing of a time. And his great words bring him into swift destruction, (vv. 11, 12,) which would render the title *son of perdition* very appropriate to him also.

The question now arises, is this little horn the same power or person who is represented by the beasts in the XIII. and XVII. chaps. of the Apocalypse? We may notice several corresponding features: his blasphemous words;—his persecution of the saints;—his coming up after the other horns and becoming the eighth in number, as in XVII. 11;—the time of his continuance, viz. 3 times and a half, (which are commonly supposed to be the same as the forty-two months or 1260 days mentioned in the Apocalypse);—his sudden and fiery destruction;—and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, and of his saints upon his removal. It is very remarkable also that as the beast in Rev. XIII. 1—8 possesses all the heads and horns of the four beasts of Dan. VII. (except the little horn,) and bears a resemblance to them all, (see v. 2,) which would seem to indicate the possession of the power and dispositions of them all—so the eleventh horn appears to sway the power of the fourth beast who comes into the dominion of the whole earth, (v. 23) in the room of the others who preceded him.

If we search farther in the book of Daniel we shall find other prophecies concerning a being who is distinguished by opposition to God and blasphemy. Chapter VIII. furnishes one.—In verse 9 a *little horn* is seen coming forth from one of the

four quarters into which a former kingdom (which is universally admitted to be Alexander's) had been divided. This horn waxes great—signalizes himself by exploits against the *pleasant land* and the *holy people*, (vv. 9, 24) expressions which can signify nothing less than the land of Israel and the Jewish nation. The vision is declared by the interpreting angel (v. 17) to be fulfilled at the *time of the end*—the *last end of the indignation*. (v. 19.) And it may be a fair enquiry whether this is not the indignation against the Jews which began at the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Luke xxi. 23; Isaiah x. 25.) He proceeds to explain, (v. 23) "In the latter time of their kingdom," (i. e. Alexander's successors) "when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences shall stand up"—"he shall stand up against the *Prince of Princes*, but he shall be broken without hand,"—without human agency, but by the immediate visitation of God.

Again in Dan. xi. there is "a king who shall do according to his will, (v. 36,) and shall *exalt himself and magnify himself above every god* and shall *speak marvellous things against the God of gods*, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." He appears to have cast off the profession of his ancestors, (v. 37.)*—he nevertheless establishes an idolatrous worship, (vv. 38, 39.)—he enters into the *glorious land*, (v. 41,) and plants the tabernacles of his palace *between the seas in the glorious holy mountain*: yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him. (v. 45.) And at that time Michael (who is as God) stands up, the great tri-

bulation occurs, the Jews are delivered, and the resurrection takes place,^c which fixes the period of this king to be immediately before the coming of the Lord. He arises, it should seem, from the same quarter as the king in chapter viii.^d and begins with a small power, (aptly represented by a little horn,) which he speedily augments by his craftiness. (vv. 21—23.) These two then, —from their origin, their actions, (particularly against Israel,) their opposition to God and their preternatural destruction,—are clearly to be regarded as one and the same.

But the identity of the man of sin and the wilful king of Dan. xi. seems too plain to admit of a question. "Any man may be satisfied" says Bp. Newton, "that St. Paul alluded to this description by Daniel, because he hath not only borrowed the ideas but hath even adopted some of the phrases and expressions." It will be further apparent from these particulars: his words against God, —his exalting himself above all gods or objects of worship,—he is destroyed *in the height of his prosperity*,—at the *time of the redemption of Israel* and the *appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ*. If we consider also the idolatry established under his sanction, the description will include another particular which is given of the beast in Rev. xiii. And these chapters of Daniel appear to form a connecting link between St. Paul and St. John. The prophetic Spirit in both seems to have directed them to these visions of Daniel—by exhibiting to the one a similar vision, and by inspiring the other with the words and phrases by which those visions are described. We may therefore consider these Scrip-

* The expression "the God of his fathers" would seem to imply that this person was of Jewish extraction.

^c Dan. xii. 1—3.

^d Dan. xi. 4.

tures, 2 Thess. II, Dan. VII, VIII, XI, Rev. XIII. and XVII, to relate to the same time and the same events.

There are other prophecies by Isaiah foretelling the oppression of Israel by one whose character, conduct and pretensions closely resemble those of the man of sin and the king of Dan. XI. At the time of Israel's deliverance by the power and mercy of the Lord as predicted in Isaiah XIV, (with which compare ch. IX. 3—7, X. 12—27,) the king of Babylon, or the Assyrian, their oppressor is to be destroyed. (vv. 1—4.) In vv. 13, 14, his pretensions are thus recorded: "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt my throne *above the stars of God*. (Comp. Dan. VIII. 10, 11.) I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. (Comp. Dan. XI. 45; Ps. XLVIII. 2.) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I *will be like the Most High*." If with this we compare Dan. VII. 25, and 2 Thess. II. 4, the examination will lead us to discover a very close resemblance, amounting almost to identity, between the persons mentioned in the different passages of Scripture. And this will be further confirmed by comparing chap. XIV. 25—where it is foretold that the Assyrian should fall in the land and upon the mountains of Israel—with Dan. XI. 41—45, where the same end is declared to await the blaspheming person who is therein described.

Other passages might be produced in further illustration of the prophecy in question; but these will suffice to shew that a power of the same character as the man of sin has been foreseen and foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament; and that as their predictions have especial reference to the affairs of the Jewish people, those of the Apostles

extend our view to the influence which shall be exercised over the churches of the Gentiles.

With regard to the identity of the principal persons of the different prophecies which have been quoted, we may hear objections urged by many, inasmuch as they have been frequently interpreted as belonging to different subjects. We may therefore in closing this division of the prophecy offer these reasons in favour of the supposition in addition to the proofs which have been already adduced. Each one forms the *burden* of the prophecy in which he is described, and is presented as the *principal actor* in the opposition which is manifested against the Lord and his people. Each has existence *immediately before the coming of the Lord*, because he appears to their *destruction*. And the pretensions asserted by them would be inconsistent with the supposition of their being different, because, existing at the same time, they would be disputing amongst themselves instead of directing their forces against Christ and his Church. Each is a blasphemer of God, exalting himself to an equality with God, or even above Him. And if it be admitted that the antichristian apostacy of the last days is the full development of the mystery of iniquity, and that it is of the highest importance to the Church to be forewarned of its nature and tendency, we may discover sufficient reason for the frequent and varied description of the *head under whose influence it will be perfected*.

3. A third particular of the description of the man of sin is that *he shall sit as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*.

Now as I do not profess to give my own interpretation of the prophecy, but simply to illustrate it by a comparison of apparently similar passages of Scripture, and thus to

discover if possible an infallible exposition of its meaning, I freely admit that in this part of the subject my task is not easy.

There are three different senses in which we shall find the expression *the temple of God* used in Scripture, excluding of course the application of it to the throne of God in heaven.—These are :—

1. The believer's body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

2. The Church universal, which is designed for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

3. The temple at Jerusalem, as it has been and will be hereafter.

This act of the man of sin is evidently the establishment of idolatry, setting up himself in the place of God, or otherwise controlling the worship of his temple.

Now we read in Matt. xxiv. 15, that at some time, then future, the *Abomination of Desolation* spoken of by Daniel the prophet should stand in the *holy place*; which holy place is shewn by Middleton, in his treatise on the Greek Article, *in loco*, to mean the *Temple of Jerusalem*. The time when this should take place is further shewn to be at the period of *the great tribulation*, which can be no other than that mentioned in Dan. xii. 1, which immediately precedes the coming of the Lord.* It is commonly supposed that this abomination is the same thing as the Roman armies with their idolatrous standards which encompassed Jerusalem, and by the appearance of which the disciples of Jesus were to

know that the desolation thereof was nigh.^f But whatever primary reference the prophecy in St. Matthew's gospel might have to that event, the two prophecies appear to be different in many respects. Besides, if by the *holy place* the temple or its courts were intended, it is manifest that the disciples must have availed themselves of the Lord's warning in St. Luke long before the Roman standards could have been placed there. They would not therefore have seen the abomination of desolation standing there, if by that abomination the Roman ensigns were signified. And if we refer to the prophet Daniel, (as our Lord directs,) we shall find in chap. xi. 31, that the person commonly called the wilful king, to whom reference has already been made, "shall pollute the sanctuary of strength and take away the daily sacrifice, and place the abomination that maketh desolate." And although this has been variously interpreted, some referring it to Antiochus Epiphanes, (who in many respects seems to have been a remarkable type of Antichrist with reference to the Jewish nation,) and others referring it to the Romans,—yet we certainly know that whoever does this, the same continues down to the end of the chapter and falls upon the mountains of Israel, at what time Michael shall stand up on behalf of the children of Israel.*

We may compare together chaps. viii. 11—14, ix. 27, marginal reading, and xii. 11. We may recollect also that it was the ambition of

* Matt. xxiv. 21—29.

^f Luke xxi. 20.

* I am aware that some commentators have divided this prophecy at the 36th verse, supposing that the vile person of v. 21 continues so far, and that the remainder belongs to some other person. Some have asserted on this supposition that the former part has been fulfilled, and the latter is yet to be accomplished. This appears to be more for the sake of accommodating the prophecy to past events, than because there is any thing in it to require such a division. The division on the contrary is purely gratuitous and very unnatural. To any unprejudiced reader it would be evident that the subject of the prophecy is the same throughout.

Lucifer & to sit upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north, (where is the city of the great king,^h) and to be like the Most High. How remarkably similar is the language of the Apostle, inspired by the same Spirit, concerning the man of sin: "He as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

The reader will doubtless have anticipated the conclusion to which these Scriptures evidently lead us;—viz. that the temple of God at Jerusalem is the place where the man of sin will fix his seat. We may marvel—we may doubt,—but the word of God will receive its full accomplishment.

III. *The time of Antichrist's revelation* will form the 3rd division of the prophecy. "Now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time." He will be revealed when the restraint which has been imposed upon the workings of the mystery of iniquity, shall be removed. "For," as the apostle declares, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work, ("and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world,"ⁱ) only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked be revealed."^k What this restraint is does not clearly appear from any Scripture that I can recollect. It is generally understood to be the Roman empire; which was the interpretation of many of the fathers, whose opinions on the subject are quoted by bishop Newton; and most modern commentators have, I believe, agreed to this. As the restraining power was known to the Thessalonians, and from them the knowledge

was in all probability communicated to others, if not by the apostle himself, it would be unwise to reject the tradition. If then the Roman empire be signified by the fourth of Daniel's great monarchies, (as it is generally supposed to be,) it must continue until the *time of the end*—until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. During these times "Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles;" and as the Romans were the first to tread it down, according to the Lord's prediction, so perhaps the times of the Gentiles may endure so long as that empire in some form or other shall continue. Cyril of Jerusalem, as quoted by bishop Newton, saith, "This predicted Antichrist will come when the times of the Roman empire shall be fulfilled," (ὅταν πληρωθῶσιν οἱ καιροὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας.) In the mean time "the Gospel of the kingdom is preached in the whole world, for a witness unto all the Gentiles:" and then (saith our Lord) shall come *the end*.^l "The end" may be considered, I conceive, as equivalent to the expression "*the time of the end*" in Daniel viii. 17 and xii. 9. Now as in Daniel viii. we learn that certain things there predicted are to take place *at that time*, so in Matt. xxiv. we find things of a similar kind are to be accomplished at a time which I understand to be subsequent to the time mentioned verse 14, i. e. *when the end* is come. There is (v. 15) the setting up of the abomination of desolation in the holy place, which I think has been shewn to be the work of Antichrist. At the time of the end therefore he is revealed. But this is not till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. While, therefore, the Gospel is being preached in the whole world, and

^g Isa. xiv.

^h Compare Psalm xlviii. 2, Matt. v. 35.

ⁱ 1 John iv. 3.

^k 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

^l Matt. xxiv. 14.

the Holy Spirit is at work "in taking out of the Gentiles a people for his Name,"^m the full development of the mystery of iniquity is restrained. But the day of salvation will have an end; the Spirit will not always strive with man; their times (*καιροι*) will be fulfilled; and when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in (the *πληρωμα*, or the part which is grafted into the tree of life in the room of the Jewish branches which were cut off*) then probably will the nations be left to fill up the measure of their iniquities under the influence of the man of sin;—then also will the Lord think upon his covenant with Abraham and with David, and Israel shall be prepared for the manifestation of his mercy and truth, as it is written in Psalm xcvi. 3.

Perhaps some light may be thrown on this difficult subject by Rev. xiv. 6, &c. First is seen the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people;—then follows another angel proclaiming the fall of Babylon, which (as we learn from Rev. xvii.) is effected by Antichrist;—and then the third angel follows with the word of warning against the worship of the beast and his image, &c. If these verses are taken as representing events in their chronological order, we certainly learn that Antichrist is in full power after the

universal proclamation of the Gospel, as he will be also at the appearing of the Lord with all his saints.

IV. The fourth head relates to the *destruction of Antichrist*. (v. 8.)

This part of the subject has been somewhat anticipated. But it is important to point out particularly that it is the Lord who comes in person to overthrow him, and to destroy him, *τη επιφανειᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ*.

He is not alone in his wickedness, nor in his destruction; for we find in Scripture a gathering together of the powers of the earth against the Lord, and against his Christ. This is foretold in numerous places of holy writ; amongst others in Psalm ii. cxviii. 10—12, and particularly in Rev. xvi. 14—16; xvii. 13, 14; xix. 19—21. And these again refer us to a passage in Isaiah xi. 4, which declares, "with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;"—corresponding with that in our prophecy, "the Lord shall consume him with the Spirit of his mouth." Also in Rev. xix. 11—15, the prophet sees him coming in person with all his saints to the destruction of the Antichristian confederacy, and "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." But as we find the beast and false prophet preeminent in wickedness, so they have a preeminence in destruction: "these both were cast alive into a lake of

^m Acts xv. 14.

* Israel's blindness is to continue "till the fulness of the Gentiles is come in." (Rom. xi.) But the general and universal conversion of the Gentiles is subsequent to the restoration of the Jews, as clearly appears from the 12th and 15th verses of this chapter, and also from the xvth Acts, 16, 17, where the Gentile's seeking the Lord is represented as *consequent* on the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David. Hence the *πληρωμα* does not mean the universal conversion of the Gentiles, but only the completeness of that elect number who are taken out of the Gentiles according to the divine purpose in the present dispensation. The precise meaning of the word in this place would seem to be the same as in Matt. ix. 16; and Mark ix. 21, a "somewhat put in to fill up." The elect portion of the Gentiles fills up the chasm made by the breaking off of the Jews.

fire burning with brimstone,"—"that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."^a By this fiery destruction we are reminded of the overthrow of the typical Assyrian, described by Isaiah chap. ix. 5; x. 16, 17; xxx. 27—33, where Tophet is expressly declared to be prepared for the king, the leader of the Assyrian oppressors. These passages ought to be closely compared with each other; and when it is remembered how very inapplicable the expressions are to the destruction of Sennacherib and his army, the propriety of their application to the antitype of the Assyrian will be manifest.

This may be a suitable place for gathering up and arranging what has been already referred to on this part of the subject. There are four things to be considered.

1. *The reason for which he is destroyed*: viz. his opposition to God, and perverse, blasphemous, and arrogant speeches against him; (see Dan. vii. 11; xi. 36; 2 Thess. ii. 4; Isaiah x. 12—16; xiv. 13—15; Psalm xii. 3—5; also 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2; Jude 4, 13—18; which texts I apprehend afford us a view of the state of the world generally, under the influence of the man of sin;) and persecution of the people of God. Dan. vii. 21—26; Rev. xiii. 7—10.

2. *The time when he is destroyed*: viz. when he is engaged in a confederacy against the Lord and against his people. Psalm ii. 2—5; Isa. xxxix. 7, 8; Dan. viii. 24, 25; xi. 36—45; xii. 1, 2; Joel iii. 1, 2, 13—16; Micah iv. 11—13; Rev. xvi. 13—16; xvii. 12—14; xix. 19, 20.

3. *The place of his destruction*: the mountains of Israel. Isa. xiv. 24—26 compared with chap. x. 24

—27. (See also Psalm lxxvi. compared with Psalm xlviii.) Zech. xiv. 2—5, compared with Rev. xix. 11—20; Dan. xi. 45; Rev. xvi. 16, compared with Joel iii. 1, 2. See also Ezek. xxxix. 4, 17.

4. *The manner of his destruction*: without human agency. Dan. viii. 25. The voice of the Lord and the fiery flame. Isa. xxx. 27—33; Ezek. xxxviii. 22; Rev. xix. 20; Dan. vii. 9—11, compare with these Scriptures 2 Thess. i. 7—9; ii. 8; Mal. iv. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 7; Matt. xiii. 41, 42.

These are some of the places of Scripture which relate to this important point. When this is established in the mind of the attentive student of the Bible, it will present itself in every part of the sacred volume, as the crisis to which all the workings of Satan are made ultimately to lead; and it will be seen typified or expressly declared no less frequently than the consummation of the church's deliverance, when Satan shall be bruised under her feet.

We proceed now to a very important feature in the description of Antichrist.

V. *His coming with Satanic influence and agency.* (vv. 9, 10.) That the deceivers of the last times shall be endued with an extraordinary power is manifest from the warning of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 23—25: "there shall be false Christs and false prophets, who shall shew *great signs and wonders*, inasmuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect." And that this power is of Satanic origin, the apostle Paul seems to intimate in 1st Tim. iv. 1, where the apostacy is marked by giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Again, the men of the last days resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres did Moses;

^a Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10.

i. e. by magical incantations and devilish miracles.^o

But this point is more fully established by the testimony of Rev. XIII. where we read concerning the beast with *seven* heads and *ten* horns, whom we have identified with Antichrist, that *the dragon* (who is "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan," chap. XII. 9,) gave him his power, (*δυναμιν*) and his seat, and great authority. And of that other beast who is called the false prophet, we read in verses 13, 14, that "he *doeth great wonders*, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven to the earth in the sight of men; and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of *those miracles* which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. And these prevail over *all but the elect*." P Chapter XVI. 13, 14 reveals the same agency: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and of the beast, and of the false prophet; for they are the spirits of devils *working miracles*, &c.;" and through their operation is brought to pass that awful combination of the powers of earth and hell against the Lord and against his anointed, to which we have had such frequent occasion to refer. Now, can any doctrine be more strongly confirmed than that which is taught in 2nd Thess. II. 9, 10, by the Scriptures which have been adduced? Let it be carefully examined in connexion with them, and let its awful words sum up their concurrent testimony.—"His coming is after the *working of Satan*, with all *power*, and *signs*, and *lying wonders*, and with all *deceivableness of unrighteousness* in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved."

It may appear strange to some

that Satan should be permitted to exercise such power on the earth; but the testimony of the Scriptures must be conclusive against all such thoughts in every Christian's mind. That he has heretofore exercised such influence we learn from the recorded miracles of the Egyptian Magicians, the afflictions of Job, the temptation of David,^q the warnings against witchcraft and magic and false prophets in Deuteronomy and elsewhere, the deceiving of Ahab, the temptation and apostacy of Judas, and the many cases of demoniacal possession in the days of our Lord and his apostles. But the probability of his future agency is strengthened by Rev. XII. 12, which can hardly be interpreted as yet fulfilled. And this is still further confirmed by the sixth and last division of our subject, which teaches us that there will be—

VI. *A Judicial blindness.* (vv. 11, 12.) "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, (or *the lie*, τῷ ψευδεῖ, the false pretensions of the man of sin,) that they all might be damned who *believed not the truth*, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The apostle confirms this prediction by similar assertions in other epistles. In 1 Tim. IV. 2, he speaks, not only of seducing spirits, but of false teachers, who have their consciences seared as with a hot iron. In his second epistle chap. III. 13, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived:" and chap. IV. 3, he urges ministerial diligence on his son Timothy by the consideration, that "the time will come when they will *not endure sound doctrine*, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall *turn away their ears from the truth*, and shall be turned

^o 2 Tim III. ; Exod. VII.

^p v. 8, 15, 16.

^q 1 Chron. XXI. 1.

unto fables." The apostles Peter and Jude describe certain fearful characters, both among teachers and followers, corresponding very closely with those apostates of whom the apostle Paul forewarned the churches by his preaching and epistles.*

In Isaiah xxx. 28 we read of a "sifting of the nations, with the sieve of vanity; and a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err." On which the following note is in D'oyley and Mant's Bible:—"The fan (Kimchi observes) with which God shall winnow the nations will be the fan of emptiness and perdition; for nothing useful shall remain behind, but all shall come to nothing and perish. In like manner a bridle is designed to guide the horse in the right way; but the bridle, which God will here put into the jaws of the people, shall not direct them aright, but shall, *in his judgment on their stubbornness, make them err and lead them into destruction.*" So in chap. lx. 2 it is declared "that darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, when the Lord shall arise upon Zion, and his glory shall be seen upon her." This blinding and hardening of men's hearts we find frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, as the judgment of God upon their obstinacy or unbelief. See amongst many other instances the case of Pharaoh, Exod. iv. 21; Sihon Deut. ii. 30; the Canaanites, Josh. xi. 20; Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 20; and generally it is written in Rom. ix. 18 "whom he will he hardeneth." Now the Lord gives up to Satan's power those whom he thus hardens. 1 Kings xxii. 23; John xiii. 2, 27.

I will now bring to a close my attempt to illustrate this deeply interesting portion of God's word.

My object in the undertaking has been simply to search the Scriptures for an infallible exposition of its meaning, and to interpret it by an impartial comparison of its several parts with those other Scriptures which seem more or less clearly to refer to the same subjects. With what success this has been attended, as far as my readers are concerned, I must leave them to decide:—

Fecit quod potui—potui quod Christe dedisti.

For myself I have the satisfaction of having attained to a settled conviction with regard to the principal subject of enquiry—"Is popery *the apostacy* and the Pope the man of sin?" The conclusions to which I have been led by the foregoing statements of Scripture, I would now humbly offer to the reader. And I do earnestly pray that He who has promised to guide us into all truth, and to shew us things to come, may bestow his blessing abundantly both on the writer and the reader, that the truth, and that alone, may be embraced by them.

It appears then from the foregoing Scriptures

1. That a general apostacy, affecting all Christendom, will take place towards the close of the present dispensation, shortly before the coming of the Lord, of whose near approach it will be the sign. By this apostacy the Gentiles will consummate the measure of their iniquities, and bring upon themselves the predicted judgments.

2. That "*Antichrist*," called also "*the Man of Sin*," and "*the Wicked one*"—has yet to be revealed. All other forms of evil have been only as it were the types and precursors of this last worst form of the mystery of iniquity. He will then be endued with Satanic power and wickedness to a degree far surpass-

* Acts xx. 29, 30.

ing all his predecessors. He will assume divine honours, not in virtue of a delegated authority, or as the representative of the Invisible, but for himself; and will claim worship as God in his temple. By the miracles and wonders which are performed by himself or in his name, by "the false prophet," and by the Satanic influence with which he shall be attended, he will succeed in deceiving the whole professing Christian world, at least, except the elect, and these he persecutes even to the death. It appears also that he will be a bitter persecutor of the Jews, with whose future destiny he seems intimately connected. The temple where he sits as God appears to be the temple at Jerusalem, where he abolishes the daily sacrifice and places the abomination of desolation; and the place where he falls is the holy land, the mountains of Israel.

3. It seems probable that he will be first manifested somewhere in the northern part of the dominions possessed by Alexander the Great; and from the expressions in the 37th verse of Dan. xi. it would appear that he will be of Jewish origin: these things however I do not press as conclusions. There may be a question too whether the Antichrist be an individual, or a body of men animated by the same spirit of wickedness, and whether the term *false prophet* be only a name to characterize a number of persons deserving that appellation. Our Lord warns us in Matt. xxiv. that there shall be false *Christs* and false *prophets*, who shall succeed in deceiving all but the elect. Nevertheless, the actions and pretensions of the man

of sin in 2 Thess. of the king in Dan. viii. and xi. and of the Assyrian, are those of an individual, and cannot well be otherwise interpreted than of a single person. The horns of the Ram and of the He Goat in Dan. viii. denote *individuals*; and consistency would require that the *little horn* arising from one of the four notable horns which succeeded the great horn of the goat, should also be understood to mean an individual. The same rule should hold, I think, in the 7th chapter with respect to the eleven kings.

From these considerations we must conclude it to be an erroneous view of the Scriptures which would confine the application of the foregoing prophecies to the Pope and the Romish apostacy. I would say that the church of Rome is not "*THE apostacy*," nor the Pope "*THE Antichrist*." The church of Rome has erred grievously and fatally, by obscuring the truth committed to the keeping of the universal church and substituting in its stead commandments of men, both antiscritptural and superstitious. But though by thus acting, she may have become an apostate church and have forfeited her part in the church catholic; and though the pretensions of the Pope are blasphemous and antichristian, these charges will not prove the church to be *the apostacy* which the Holy Ghost contemplated, nor the Pope *the man of sin*. St. John in 1st Epl. chap. ii. speaks of many antichrists who had then appeared, and of *THE Antichrist* who had not appeared, but was expected.*

The Romish miracles, whether real or pretended, do not answer

* Some writers on prophecy seem to consider that the very essence of Protestantism consists in denouncing the church of Rome as the apostacy, and the Pope as the man of sin. I do not think that Protestantism will lose one iota of the truth which it asserts, by ceasing to make such an application of the Scriptures. This remark applies especially to the church of England, which at the Reformation simply renounced the

the description given of those by which the man of sin establishes his pretensions : for who was ever converted to the Romish doctrines by them ? What effect have they wrought beyond their own credulous followers ? Yet so mighty is the effect to be produced by the Antichristian miracles, that the elect only, and they hardly, escape. And does the acknowledged fact that pious and godly men have lived and died in the communion of the church of Rome correspond with the language of the Scriptures concerning the followers of Antichrist ? It is written " God shall send then strong delusion, &c. that they all might be damned, &c." " All that dwell on the earth (except the elect) shall worship the beast." " And if any man worship the beast, &c. the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

The argument need not be carried farther. The conclusions we have drawn above forbid the application against which we contend. Another apostacy more extensive and more fatal, another Antichrist more subtle and more powerful, are to be expected. Oh ! who can tell how

soon these things may be manifested ? The fatal snare is spreading. Indifference to the truth, which is the real meaning of the much vaunted liberalism in religion and politics, is preparing the way for the seducer ; and we may be even now on the verge of the fulfilment of all the prophecies. Ye who look for the Lord, be not dismayed : when ye see these things come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, knowing that your redemption draweth nigh. Amen ! W.

We have not interrupted the argument of our Correspondent by appending notes : but though we have deemed it expedient to give insertion to his communication, on account of the general importance of the subject, and the ability with which he treats certain particulars of it, we equally think it a duty not to let it pass without two or three concluding remarks upon it.

In his attempt to shew that all the notices in Scripture of an Antichristian power relate to one and the same power or person only, he overlooks, as we think some important circumstances in the pro-

usurped authority of the Pope and the *corruptions* of faith and practice which had been introduced under that authority, while she retained the apostolic doctrine and discipline which she had received long before the emissaries of Rome set foot on these shores.

That the reformers might have thus applied the prophetic description of Antichrist to the church of Rome and her bishop, is not to be wondered at, if we consider the striking resemblance which she bears to them in many of her superstitious practices and arrogant pretensions. They had no conception of a more fatal perversion of Christianity than that from which they had been delivered. They saw a fearful development of the mystery of iniquity, and denounced it as that which they saw in the Scriptures. We should do well to follow them in hatred to the system which they reprobated, while we are on our guard against a still more formidable adversary which is ready to be revealed.

But by this is manifested the wonderful structure of the prophetic word, which is in itself an evidence of its divine inspiration—that it adapts itself to every successive manifestation of the mystery of iniquity, and affords to the Church, as it suffers under each, the consolation and support which is suited to its present necessity ; while it is reserved for the full development of that mystery to give complete fulfilment to all its predictions ; when it will be seen that the language in which they were couched was not too strong, nor the characteristic features at all redundant or difficult to trace in the reality.

phacies which describe these powers.

1st. He infers that the Little Horn of Dan. vii. and Dan. viii. must be the same. The similarity of the description of these *little horns* in some of their particulars, and the difference in other respects, is an argument to our minds that they are *not* the same. For it seems to us unaccountable that immediately after the description of the rise of the little horn in the one chapter, there should follow another vision, the burden of which is likewise the history of the rise of a little horn. But what appears conclusive to us is, that the horn of chap. vii. arises out of the *fourth* beast, or Roman empire; whereas the horn of chap. viii. arises out of one of the four horns which proceeded from the broken horn of the Goat, and this corresponds with the *third* beast, or leopard, of Dan. viii.

2ndly. Our Correspondent conceives that the circumstance of the little horn of chap. vii. plucking up three of the ten horns before him, thereby making himself the *eighth* horn, is analogous to the *eighth* king of Rev. xvii. There is however this important difference: that the ten horns in Dan. vii. are evidently existing *contemporaneously* with each other; and so afterwards the eight. But the eight kings of Rev. xvii. exist *successively*; for "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come," &c.

3rdly. A due consideration of the *ends* of the various Antichristian powers will lead to the conclusion, that they are not all the same. To give only one instance. The beast of Dan. vii. is *slain*, and then his body or dead carcase is given to the burning flame: whereas the beast

and false prophet of Rev. xix. are *taken captive* and cast *alive* into the lake of fire, &c.

4th. A most important consideration likewise is, that the Antichrist of Dan. vii. evidently appears when the empire of the fourth beast, or Roman empire, is divided into ten kingdoms. But we have not only seen that empire long since broken up and divided; but it has since passed away; for who can tell us where it now is?

Finally, the argument of W. at p. 207, col. 2nd, that they cannot be different,—because, if two Antichristian powers were to exist at the same time, their independent and exclusive pretensions would set them disputing among themselves, instead of directing their forces against Christ and his church,—is quite contrary to manifest historical facts. The world has long seen two rival powers, viz. Mahomet and the Pope, both equally blasphemous and arrogant in their pretensions, and exerting their power against Christ. We have likewise seen Herod, Pontius Pilate, and Caiaphas, (who appear from the Psalms, together with Judas, to have been types of the Antichristian powers,) quarreling among themselves, yet uniting against Christ. And we see in our own times papists and radicals most cordially hating each other in secret, and yet combining together, and directing their united energies against the church.

These circumstances lead us therefore to hesitate before we can receive the theory of our Correspondent as a whole; however we may think particular parts of it to be worthy of serious consideration.

EDITOR.

Correspondence.

"THIS GENERATION."—MATT. XXIV. 34.

To the Editor of the Investigator.

Sir,

As the verse ("Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled") is generally quoted as an insuperable objection to applying the portion of Scripture, with which it stands in connexion, to the second coming of Christ to establish his Millennial kingdom on earth, allow me to quote a note from Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on Matt. xxiv. 34.

The Doctor may be considered as an impartial testimony on the subject, as he is by no means considered a modern Millennarian.—

v. 34. "This generation shall not pass," ἡ γενεα αὐτῆς this race, i. e. the Jews, shall not cease from being a *distinct people*, till all the counsels of God relative to them and the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. Some translate ἡ γενεα αὐτῆς *this generation*, meaning the persons who were then living, that they should not die before these signs &c. took place; but though this was true, as to the calamities that fell upon the Jews, and the destruction of their government, temple, &c. yet as our Lord mentions Jerusalem continuing to be under the power of the Gentiles, till the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, (i. e. till all the nations of the world should receive the Gospel of Christ, after which the Jews themselves should be converted unto God, Rom. xi. 25.) I think it more proper not to restrain its meaning to the few years which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem; but to

understand it of the care taken by divine Providence to preserve them as a *distinct people*, and yet to keep them out of their own land and from their temple service."

Thinking this quotation may aid further to establish the view which has already been taken of this verse.

I remain, &c.

W. G.

THE SIXTH VIAL.—REV. XVI.

To the Editor of the Investigator.

Sir,

I beg to address you, and as shortly as is possible, on a sufficiently important subject. I agree with the general body of your Correspondents, in thinking that the prophetic portions of Scripture have been unwarrantably, and indeed dangerously, neglected by some; and still farther, that a decided prejudice against the study of them has been excited by others. I am also of opinion, that the study of prophecy has restored many a careless mind to Christian comforts and devout impressions; which is less to be wondered at if it be allowed, (as I think it must be,) that within the last thirty years so remarkable a light has been thrown upon the obscurer points of Daniel and the Apocalypse, as to leave little reasonable doubt that the Spirit of God has furthered the effect; though *not* to afford absolute demonstration thereof. I add those last words, because too many writers on these topics have used the terms "estab-

lished," "proved," and "demonstrated," far too freely, and therefore disadvantageously to their cause.

What however may be decidedly good in itself, is scarcely ever, as the world is at present constituted, free from some peculiar danger of its own : and I suspect you will concur in the observation, that an interest of so captivating and engrossing a nature may be, and often has been, excited by works on prophecy, as to render all common occurrences, including of course many valuable but every-day duties, quite tasteless in comparison. One ill effect of such high state of excitement is to generate impatience, not only in the student, but in his readers ; and (to speak the truth) something like disgust with the word of God, if their impatience be not gratified.

Sir, I have considered this prelude necessary, and shall for the present assume, that we all agree in applying a leading event described under the sixth Apocalyptic vial, to the exhaustion of the Ottoman (Turkish) empire. And why do I say a leading event ?—Because so many expositors have treated it as *the* leading, or rather indeed the *only* event, to be brought about by that vial. Whereas, various other trials or calamities are foretold ; and the sixth is, (to all appearance) the longest in operation of all the vials excepting one : and (to judge by Rev. xvi. *alone*,) as long in exhaustion as that one.

The events under the sixth vial, having been described successively in the sacred canon, will, I should humbly contend, be successive in operation. If so, those worthy and zealous writers, whose eagerness for *great events* has incited them to pronounce upon the commencement of the *seventh* vial woe, may easily be shewn to have proceeded rashly, and on untenable ground. Let me

observe that the expression "*Dried up*" most probably means, not the gradual declension merely, but the absolute termination of the power typified by *the river Euphrates*. If such be the meaning of those words, the Euphrates is *not* dry ; though the Turkish empire is, to be sure, in such a state as nothing can illustrate more perfectly and happily than the terms "*drying up*." So far, however, is the Turkish government from being already extinct, that during the last year it crushed a formidable rebellion in Albania ; and not many weeks ago the Sultan was re-placed (by Russian concession) in possession of Silistria. That we are now living under the influence of the sixth vial, I am astonished that any one should doubt, who attends in any respect to these matters. But it is at the same time painful to see some writers of great attainments and eminence cling so tenaciously to their own systems as to argue, *in the face of an universally notorious fact*, that the sixth vial only commenced—in 1822, according to one,—and 1823 according to another. It cannot be necessary to repeat that the Greek revolt broke out early in the spring of 1821, inasmuch as prince Ypsilanti's proclamations (followed, or even accompanied by acts of hostility) were announced in April, *at the latest*, of that year, by all the newspapers of Europe, under the triumphant prelude of "*Revolution in Greece !!*" I briefly now remind you, Sir, that the contest between the Turks and Greeks, after more than six years struggle, terminated by the acknowledged independence of the latter, shortly after the affair of Navarino.

That degree of Turkish humiliation was succeeded by the peace, imposed on the part of Russia, in autumn 1829 ; while at mid-winter 1832 the battle of Iconium (*Konieh*)

again laid the Ottoman power at the mercy of a conqueror,—and that conqueror her own former vassal.

On these subjects we have not hitherto been allowed positive proof by Providence; but I assume, that the effusion of the sixth vial commenced in spring 1821: and why?—not because the Ottoman empire had not been long visibly declining; but because up to that time no material diminution had taken place in her territory. Whereas since the dawn of the Greek Revolution, her exhaustion has proceeded with an accelerated and portentous impulse, and she has lost mighty provinces both in Europe and Asia. It is true perhaps that the mystic Euphrates has *ceased to flow*: still she is not *dry*. When she becomes so, “the kings of the east,” now darkly guessed at, may begin to be actually discernible; and then, in all likelihood, will the delusions of the three

foul spirits admit of far less dispute than they do at present, as likewise the nature of their (pretended) miracles. General events may then also point more perceptibly towards “The wars of that Great Day.”

With respect to the fifteenth verse of the chapter now under consideration, (the coming of the Lord as a thief,) I shall not venture upon a subject so inconceivably awful. But *it must mean something*; and it has pleased the Holy Spirit to include that verse within the sixth vial’s operation.

The purport of this letter, Sir, is to repress if possible that impetuosity and over-eagerness for wondrous dispensations, by which many writers, it may be feared, have injured the cause which is doubtless nearest to their hearts. I have probably intruded upon you too long.

I remain, &c.

G. G. Fitz-Gilbert.

Orpington, May 28, 1836.

Notices of Books.

(7) *The Pope Confounded and his Kingdom Exposed, in a divine opening of Daniel VIII. 23—25, by MARTIN LUTHER. Now first translated into English, by the Rev. HENRY COLE, late of Clare Hall, Camb. Translator of Select Works of Luther.*

Lond. Nisbet, 1836. 8vo. pp. 204. 6s. Cloth, gilt.

Our remaining limits compel us to reduce our *Review of Books* to very brief *Notices*; and the volume which heads this article has a first claim, when the eminent character of its author is considered.

In one respect we consider it a valuable and seasonable publication:

valuable, as affording some pithy and forcible arguments of the great champion of the Reformation, against the specious sophistries of the talented Romanists with whom he had to contend: *seasonable*, as exhibiting the character of popery in many of its particulars, when the harlot was yet under the influence of the fumes from the strong potations she had taken of the cup of the wine of her fornication. Notwithstanding the arrogance and absurdity still so frequently betrayed by modern popery, no person can form any adequate notion of what she was, in the period immediately suc-

ceeding to that in which she existed in the plenitude of her power, but by perusing the works of the controversialists of the age of the Reformation. Their writings are more especially useful in this respect, when they are of a prophetic character; for the nature of the case in general requires them to bring forward those facts and circumstances which are necessary for the purpose of establishing the resemblance of popery to the delineations given by the prophets; and by this means we have a portrait presented to us, which we should not otherwise possess.

It is in this point of view alone, however, that we esteem the present work. As an exposition of Daniel viii. it is now pretty well exploded; for it is applied, without any limitation, to the papacy, wheresoever found. Sir Isaac Newton and bishop Newton, and since then Mr. Cuninghame, who still considers it to represent popery, have seen the propriety, from the circumstance of the Little Horn of this chapter arising out of the *third* beast of Daniel, of limiting its application to popery in the East. But Mr. Faber, Mr. Frere, and Mr. Keith, apply it now exclusively to Mahometanism. We cannot ourselves acquiesce in the system, so much practised by the earlier protestant expositors, of making almost every thing in prophecy apply to Popery: as in the present instance Luther makes such texts as Rom. xvi. 17; 2nd Peter ii. 1, 2; chap. iii. 3, and Jude's Epistle subservient to the same views; though it is very evident to us, who have the advantage of living at a later period, that they relate to very different parties.

On this latter prophecy indeed, contained in the epistle to St. Jude, our Reformer has a remarkable observation.—“The Epistle of

Jude once seemed to me almost useless; but now, I see that it breathes the same spirit as Peter, and is written with the express design to expose and condemn the Pope.” (p. 123.) With all our admiration of Luther, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that he has his defects; and one of them is of a remarkable character, considering how vehemently he contended for the truth of God's word, and opposed the traditions of the Pharisees of his times.—Whilst he receives the canon of the Scriptures as a whole, he seems nevertheless to consider himself at liberty to judge of the importance and profitableness of the various *portions* of God's word, according to the measure of his own light and experience. The evil of thus doing, though there appear to be plausible grounds for it, is incalculable, and indirectly tends as decidedly to undermine the authority of that portion of the word of God, as if it were openly denied. How lamentably this is the case in the instance of prophecy! Men cannot see the practical tendency of many portions of it;—it appears to them “almost useless;”—and therefore they consider themselves at liberty to disregard or neglect it: whereas their duty is reverently to receive and give heed to “*every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” as *all together* being the food of man's spiritual life; and though they see not its use at present, to wait patiently the teaching of the Spirit, that they may be guided into a right understanding thereof. The impropriety of thus rashly concluding against any portion of God's word upon their own partial and inadequate experience is obvious in this and another instance in which Luther is concerned. He once denounced the epistle of St. James as *chaffy*, (*epistola straminea*,) but was, later in life, when an Anti-

nomian spirit began to prevail among some of the reformed, led to see its importance and perfect consistency with the epistles of St. James. And in the present instance, the insufficiency of man's understanding and experience to judge of the utility of any part of God's word is betrayed in a two-fold degree; first by his previously considering Jude's epistle to be *useless*, and then by his afterwards concluding it to be written "with the express design to expose and condemn the *Pope*;" in which he appears to our judgment to be still mistaken, though not in an equal degree.

We shall now endeavour in conclusion briefly to sketch his exposition of Daniel VIII. 23—25, which he introduces with a remarkable specimen of his ironical powers. The book is directed against a work of Ambrose Catharinus, who is insisting that the authority and infallibility of the Romish church is declared in *Scripture*. And Luther, having deprived him of his support from Matt. XVI. 18, and shewn him that when properly understood it makes *against* the Romish church, then proceeds to say,—that he does not therefore deny the existence of the Papistical church, and the mention of it in *Scripture*; on the contrary, he states that there is no one thing, (Christ excepted,) concerning which *so much* is said both in the Old and New Testaments; "And therefore (he adds) why should I not, in honour of my friend Catharinus, and in duty to that most holy vice-god in Christ, the Pope, proceed to shew the existence of that pre-eminent power from solid and copious *Scripture* testimony; in order that I may stop the mouths of all who dare insultingly deny that it is to be proved by the divine record?" (p. 41.) Then follows the text from Daniel, rendered thus:—

"And after their kingdom, when *prevarications* (or *transgressions*) shall have sunk them into darkness, there shall stand up a KING, powerful in *faces* (or *appearances*,) and intelligent of *propositions* (or *enigmas*;) and his efficacy shall be strengthened, but not by his own efficacy. And he shall destroy wonderful things, (or he shall *wonderfully corrupt* and destroy,) and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the people of the saints. And all shall appeal to him for judgment; and his craft shall prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and in his success he shall destroy many. And he shall stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken to pieces without hand."

"In the first place," he says, "no regard is to be paid to those who would understand this and similar places in the prophets as having reference to one person only; for such know not, that the manner of the prophets is to signify or represent under one person any whole kingdom in a body. Hence they would mistakenly make *Antichrist*, whom Paul calls "the man of sin," and "the son of perdition," to be one person; whereas the apostle would have the whole body and chaos of those impious men, and the whole succession of those that reign, to be understood as *Antichrist*. Thus in Dan. VIII. the *ram* signifies the kingdom of the Persians, the *goat* the kingdom of the Grecians." (p. 42.)

He thus accounts for his application of it to Rome—"When the prophet says, that this *king* should stand up at the end of the *four* kingdoms, of which the last is the Roman, the iron kingdom, he plainly intimates that the tyranny of the Pope began in the decline of the

Roman empire. And it actually did arise from out of the Roman empire, and in the Roman empire, and grew up in its place: as is evident from all history, &c." From which it is farther evident, that he confounds the four kingdoms which arose from the fracture of the great horn of the goat, with the four empires described in Daniel II. and VII.

He argues that the kingdom out of which Antichrist arises cannot be a gentile kingdom which has never been evangelized, because it is said they *sink into darkness* by transgressions or rebellions. This implies (as he thinks) that they had previously been illuminated; which cannot be said of the kingdoms before Christ. (p. 45.)

He explains the king's being powerful in "faces," or appearances, by the external pomp, ostentation, and specious appearance maintained by the papacy in various respects. First, as regards *persons*; as the Pope and his cardinals, with their retinue and riches. "What emperor (he asks) can you name that ever had such a profusion of wealth as this kingdom or church has?" "What Roman consul can you mention that was ever equal to one of these cardinals, archbishops, or bishops?" Then also in their *edifices*; as their palaces, their churches, their shrines, their monasteries, and the like. And likewise in their *robes and habits*; in regard to which, though it may appear to us an insignificant circumstance to adduce, the Author says: "It is by this *face*, above all the others, that this impious abomination defends itself. For who is not rendered great, holy, and worthy of adoration, by that scarlet hat, that two horned mitre, that long purple train, that mule glittering with jewels, those shoes bedizened with gold, gems and every precious ornament, and all that blaz-

ing variety of splendour, whereby those holy ones have distinguished themselves from the laity and the common habits and dress of Christians, or from every thing profane! And passing downward to the garments of the inferior orders of clergy, he shews that the Romish church has laid such emphasis upon them, that they think more of a breach of rule respecting these, than they do of a breach of God's commandments.—"What act of adultery (he asks) could be equal in enormity to the delinquency of that clerical, who should neglect to shave his pate for a whole month together? What parricide would be any way comparable with the sin of him, who should neglectfully minister at the altar without his surplice, or his ruffles, or any one tittle of his canonicals? (p. 67.) He next instances their rounds of canonical *prayer*, as being indeed a shew and pretence, having no prayer in them; and in like manner the mass, with its vigils, anniversaries, foundations and sepulchral, which he declares to be a mere *face* of piety to deceive and fleece the befooled people; as also their fastings, and the multiplying and iniquity of their feast days; and their worship of relics. Another face is their affected *celibacy* of monks and nuns; which indeed (he says) is, in another sense, not a face, but a diabolical *reality*; for it fulfils the 1st of Timothy IV. 3, and Daniel XI. 37, in which forbidding to marry is mentioned.

Their *universities*, though accounted as a *face*, are brought to notice more especially under the next clause of the text—"intelligent of propositions;" which intelligence he conceives to be likewise indicated by the *eyes* like a man in the little horn. The shew of wisdom and theology in them he considers the worst face; because it carries with

it a pretension to the *word*. By means of the propositions taught in these places, all the rest of the false fabric is supported. How entirely they are a mere face or pretence of wisdom becomes evident, wherever the true word is taught. "If (says Luther) by any act of the grace of God, these universities *should* take up the word of God to study it,—good heavens! how soon would the whole of popery, together with all its faces, fall to the ground! For this last face is evidently the main support, yea, the very bones and vital strength of this whole kingdom of faces." This is also the "*efficacy*," by which the king is strengthened, and not by his own efficacy; for, the Author remarks, that a lie cannot be supported by its own power. And by means of these propositions and these faces, in which he is supported by the efficacy of others, he has "wonderfully corrupted" all Christian worship,—and "destroyed" as many souls as he subjects to his laws and compels to obey them. His "prospering and practising" is explained much in the same manner.

"And he shall destroy the mighty people, and the people of the saints." "Here (says the Author,) if I were inclined to indulge my own thoughts, and to render the Hebrew according to my own judgment, and to understand by "the mighty" *strength*, and by "the people of the saints" the *apostles and evangelists*, which is a meaning that the words themselves seem to favour, the understanding of the passage would then be;—that the Pope would be such a one as would corrupt the holy Scriptures, which are the only *strength* of the church, and the apostles and evangelists, and would lay waste and utterly destroy them.

"And all shall appeal to him for judgment," or "all shall be according to his mind or judgment," he

explains by that notorious feature of the papal kingdom, that the Pope, making himself superior to all others, will not submit to the judgment of any other.

He interprets that "craft shall prosper in his hand," by the circumstance that even the elect have been deceived by his faces and propositions, as Bernard, Francis, Dominic, and other very holy men and women who have been left to err, so as not to be able to understand the nature of this kingdom of "faces," and to approve of many of the Pope's proceedings: otherwise they would have risen up against him; but the time was not yet come. (P. 170.) Concerning which matter he has a passage which may serve as a warning to some in our own days.—

"How then shall craft not prosper in this Pope's hand, together with all outside show, and face, and deceit, and vain hypocrisy of doctrines, (as Paul calls it,) when he prevails to destroy the authority of the Scriptures by the example of his numberless authors and saints, who always stand by him? For what is there that he cannot effect prosperously, when not only his own *faces and propositions*,—i. e. his crafty deceptions,—but also those whom you know to be true saints, favour his cause? Who dares to mutter a word in opposition, when lying is helped by truth, hypocrisy by holiness, craft by simplicity, and iniquity by godliness? O "perilous times" indeed, worthy of these "latter days," when all things, even the good, work together for evil to the reprobate; in the same way as all things, even the evil, work together for good to the elect! the latter however by the Spirit of God, the former by the spirit of Satan; as the apostle foretold it should be. Here then let

him, that dares, live in security and trust in the works and sayings of the fathers!" P. 171.

This king's "magnifying himself in his heart" is explained of the Pope's considering himself above every one, and demanding of every one just what he pleases; insomuch that he subjects all to himself, scarcely permitting the most exalted kings to kiss his holy feet. "There is not one in the world (says Luther) whom he will allow to be upon an equality with himself, how eminent soever he may be for either godliness or learning."—"He deposes princes, kings, bishops, and every one that is great and high in the world, just according to his mere lusts, making himself more high and exalted and greater in the world than all of them together.

Of the clause, "and in his success he shall destroy many" the Author says—"Who those infinite numbers are, whom success destroys and corrupts, I would rather leave to the judgment of every one, than explain particularly myself. For what is all that extensive rabble of cardinals, bishops, monks, priests, &c. but the people of the Pope, eaten and swallowed up by ease, riches, surfeit, security, luxury, and lust; wasting away this life of the flesh, without faith, without the Word, without the Scriptures, without labour, without care!" P. 175.

"And he shall stand up against the Prince of princes." "Here (exclaims the Author,) is the awful climax of the whole! that this Pope stands up against Christ himself, and sets aside his word, by putting his own word in its stead." On this point he has some observations at pages 88, 89, which, as the subject is much discussed by modern students of prophecy, will be found interesting, as coming from so eminent a writer as Luther. Speaking of

2 Thess. ii. 4,—who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, he says: "And will he also exalt himself above God, properly considered? No; God forbid! but above "all that is called God," saith the apostle: that is, above the preached word of God: for that is called *God* when it is truly preached and believed. Above God *thus* considered the Pope has long exalted himself and sat; because he makes known and preaches *himself* in the hearts of men, instead of their hearing and believing God. Therefore when Paul saith, "above all that is called God," it is in the Greek *σεβασμα*; that is, *worship*,—that which is worshiped, or the worship itself.—"He is the sole and only one of men who has, with intolerable blasphemy and pride, declared himself to be the sole and only vicar of Christ, or vice-Christ, or vice-God upon earth. And what is it to be a vicar of God, or vice-God, but 'to sit in the place of God?' And what is it 'to sit in the place of God,' but to shew himself as God."

He thus concludes the exposition, on the words "*But he shall be broken without hand.*"—"The apostle expresses the Pope's destruction thus:—'Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming, &c.' (2 Thess. ii. 8.) The *laity* therefore shall not destroy the Pope and his kingdom; though that is what he continually and miserably fears. No! he and his wicked rabble are not deserving of so light a punishment. They shall be preserved until the coming of Christ, whose most bitter enemies they are, and ever have been. This is the way in which he ought to be punished, who rises up against all, not with manual force, but with the spirit of Satan. Thus Spirit shall destroy Spirit, and

truth shall reveal falsehood; for, to reveal a lie, is to destroy it at once!" (p 177.)

(8.) *Thoughts on the Coming and Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
By JOHN COX, Minister of the Gospel, Woolwich.

Lond. Nisbet. 12mo. pp 240. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

It is refreshing, after the view taken in the article in this Number by BETA of certain texts, bearing upon the part which it would seem will be performed by some who will come forth from the ranks of Dissenters,—to open the work of one who indeed passes under that name, but whose sentiments and spirit are apparently such, that if he might be taken as a specimen of the whole body, his book would seem at once most decidedly to contradict the propriety of any application of those texts to any Dissenters of our own times. Rarely have we met with a more pleasing evidence of a truly catholic spirit than in Mr. Cox, combined with so excellent an admixture of candour, faithfulness, humility and love. We shall give a few specimens which will be interesting, as we trust, to our readers, on other accounts as well.—

"It is matter of joy, (says Mr. Cox,) that there are so many things in religion in which God's people are agreed; while there is much reason to mourn, that there are still so many things about which they differ, and that at present the church is very far removed from anything like unity of faith. The former shows the power of the Spirit of God, the latter the force of prejudice; for it is this principle which is the great bar to unity. May the Lord in mercy remove it; make us all willing to submit to his word; ready to *unlearn* what is wrong, and willing to give up every system or

sentiment, however cherished, which will not bear the test of truth!" (Pref. p. i.)—

"While upon this point of the coming of Christ before the Millennium, the author would beg leave to remind the reader, that this is *the grand point*. Many pass over this, and light down among some difficulties belonging to the subject, or begin reasoning upon the incongruity of Christ and his saints reigning upon earth. Leave for the present all difficulties alone; reason not about the personal reign: come at once to this question,—What does the Bible say about Christ's second coming? Does it give us to understand that there will be a Millennium first? if so, *where is the promise?* Or, does it tell us that tribulations and wars will last till his coming, and happiness and peace be the characteristics of that kingdom he comes to set up? Let Ps. xcvi, Dan. ii, vii, Matt. xxiv, 2 Thess. ii. 8, Rev. xi. 15—17, and various other places be well studied." (Pref. p. vii.)—

"O, when shall the present state of division and distraction cease, and the church realize the prayer of her great Intercessor, "that they may all be *one*?" When shall we again behold that goodly sight, "a multitude of believers, all of one heart and one soul?" "When shall christians be as united in serving God, as the heavenly hosts are in praising Him?—*When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, then shall these things be.*" (p 20.)—

"There is one consideration connected with this subject, the fall of Babylon, which claims our most serious attention. How wide, how searching will those judgments be, by which Babylon shall be destroyed! Where is the church that hath not been contaminated by her poisonous breath; that doth not man-

ifest somewhat of her spirit and conduct? Persecution, pharisaism, heresy, formality, outward show, crying up of the creature, are but too manifest among professors; in some, one antichristian feature is exhibited, and in some, another;—but are any wholly free? Instead then of one sect quarreling with another, had we not better be found *praying*, both for ourselves and them, that God would give us all humility to unlearn what is wrong, and honesty to avow it? Surely all classes of religious professors need much purification. “And behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave neither *root* nor *branch*. (Isa. xiv. 22, 23; Mal. iv. 1.) It is easy to cut down a tree, however great and lofty; this may be done without much disquieting the soil around; but in order to pull up every *root* and fibre of an ancient tree, the ground all around must be moved and separated. Thus will the whole of Christendom be shaken by the rooting up of Babylon; nothing but pure truth will escape; God will deliver all beside over to the paw of infidelity and the fire of wrath, &c.” (p 39.) It is useful to consider a subject like this as viewed by the candid and pious among those, whose peculiar habits and associations are different from our own. May the Lord give grace to all our readers to lay it to heart!

The foregoing will suffice as a specimen of the temper, talent, and practical tendency of the work throughout. The usual topics connected with the Redeemer's Advent and glorious kingdom are handled in the work, sometimes with originality, always with strength and clearness, and a happy facility of

serious application of his argument to the reader's heart and conscience. We shall finish our extracts with one more of considerable length, which we also commend to the reader's serious attention. It is not uncommon to hear persons who object against the study of prophecy allege, that there is a *natural* disposition in man to occupy himself about futurity, and to become deeply interested in the invisible world,—and hence the attraction (say they) of prophecy, even to the carnal mind, and the danger to be apprehended of its too greatly encouraging this prurience in man. The following extract however, when duly considered, will we think lead to a different conclusion:—

“We need not ask the question, why “the world that lieth in the wicked one” realizes not, desires not, the Lord's coming. They are spell-bound by unbelief; they walk after him who said, “What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?” But that the Church professing Jesus' name, the Church that *ought* to be conformed to those above in tastes and hopes, should be so little affected by, and feel so little delight in, the prospect of the Lord's coming, demands the most minute inquiry. One reason may be found in the indisposition there is in all our minds, naturally, to be conversant with things *future* and *invisible*, so as to be affected by them. The *present* is with us, the *visible* is around us; and it is hard to leave these, and to look at “the things not seen, which are eternal:” this is a higher attainment than at first is imagined. To do this, we need a counteracting principle, raising us above the present and visible into the future and invisible; this lever must have somewhat whereon to rest, or else all efforts will be inefficient. Grace hath found both

these; the principle is *faith*, its resting place is *God's word*; and it is only by taking hold of this, that the soul can rise. "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Faith is nothing more than so to believe the words of God, as to be affected by them, and influenced to act as they require. Professor, try your heart by this test; see what is the precise nature of your connexion with God's word: is it a connexion of the head or of the heart?

"Further we observe, that the peculiarly worldly, bustling spirit of the times, is opposed to a steady and influential expectation of things future! and more especially of the coming of Christ. The more we are mixed up with, and conformed to this world, the less sympathy shall we have with heaven. Those who have more to do with this world's politics, and this world's business, than a single eye to God's glory calls upon them to have, become as it were identified, if not with its vices, yet with its spirit; and consequently do not ardently wish to leave it, nor sincerely wish that it might be displaced, to make way for another and better state of things. We do not speak against *patriotism*; this and a political spirit, are often as distinct as superstition and religion. We do not speak against *industry*, but covetousness; and the question simply is this:—Is there not more clamour about worldly kingdoms, and more craving for worldly good, among those who profess religion, than there is patient waiting for Christ's coming, and seeking first the kingdom of God? Hope cannot be healthy and clear-visioned in this world's atmosphere; the soul that would be cheered by her discoveries, must get above it; even on Calvary.

"Thence hope directs her eagle eye,
And longs to see Him rend the sky."

"As things *evil*, so things in themselves *good*, have had a tendency to avert the Church's eye from the Lord's coming. "Compared (says one) with the cross and an interest in it, it is of little consequence whether we believe that the Lord will come before his kingdom on earth, or afterwards." Another says, "Millions are perishing in their sins; let us not stand disputing, but go and send them the gospel." Very true: to cling to the cross is the soul of all religion, to preach the gospel to every creature is our bounden duty; but did not the apostles do both these, and "wait for Christ from heaven," and "look for that blessed hope? and do not they exhort us to do the same? Can we spare any motives that may stimulate to duty, or any considerations which may help to make us happy? Should we believe in Jesus any the less, if we expected soon "to see him as he is?" Should we labour less diligently, if we thought he would soon call us "to give an account of our stewardship?"—Assuredly not."

(9) *Scriptural Reasons to shew that it is the duty and privilege of Christians to send the Gospel to the Jews.*

Dewsbury: Cullingworth, 1835, 12mo. pp. 24.

A useful Tract for distribution by those who advocate the cause of the Jews, and who also look for the literal Restoration of Israel; though we fear, that the very circumstance which commends it to our judgment, viz. its taking a correct *Scriptural and prophetic* view in the general, is just what will prevent its being circulated or approved by those to whom it is most calculated to be of use.